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The Shape of Things

WHAT SAVED THE FAIR DEAL LAST WEEK was a lucky breach in the Republican Dixiecrat coalition. Explaining the failure of his move to restore autocratic power to the House Rules Committee, Representative Cox of Georgia remarked cryptically, "The trouble was that there were too many feather-legs on hand today." We are not sure of the precise meaning of "feather-legs," but what Cox evidently had in mind was that sixty-four Republicans had deserted their leaders. This was more than enough to defeat his move to turn the clock back to January of 1949, when the power of the Rules Committee was drastically clipped as a by-product of the Truman victory. Three distinct motives were at work in the drive to undo last year's revolution. Most Southern Democrats wanted an all-powerful Rules Committee, on which they hold the balance of power, in order to keep civil-rights legislation from even coming up for a vote. Republican leaders saw in the move an excellent opportunity to cripple the entire Administration program. And a shamefully considerable number of individual Congressmen of both parties were only too glad to have again a Rules Committee that would spare them embarrassment on all sorts of controversial measures by the simple device of burying the dangerous bills in remote committee pigeonholes.

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THE WEAKNESS OF THE CAMPAIGN LAY IN its timing. With a Fair Employment Practices bill slated to come up immediately, many Republicans were rightly fearful that a vote for the Rules Committee change, which would have blocked the bill, would be interpreted by racial minorities in their districts as a concealed vote against FEPC. When G. O. P. leaders tried to rescue them by asking a postponement on the change until after the FEPC vote, their Southern partners naturally rebelled and blocked the maneuver. Republican Representative Leo E. Allen then took the tack that the real issue at stake was not civil-rights legislation at all but success or failure of the Fair Deal. This played right into the hands of Speaker Rayburn, who as a Texan was none too keen about going to the mat for FEPC but was ready enough to rally to the Administra-

tion program in general. Leaving the rostrum, he agreed enthusiastically with Allen's statement of the issue and asked pointedly, "Who won the election in 1948, anyhow?" Between Southerners who refused to join in open warfare against the Administration and Republicans with sizable racial minorities in their districts, the coalition lost its big chance. But it is idle to imagine that its guiding spirits will not try again when circumstances are more favorable. As long as Dixiecrats are accepted as Democrats in good standing and allowed to reap committee assignments to which they are not entitled, the Democrats will be exposed to just such paralyzing maneuvers.

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ALGER HISS WAS CONVICTED OF PERJURY, but few will believe he was really tried for that offense at all, particularly if Whittaker Chambers is not similarly brought to trial. Hiss was tried, in effect, for espionage—and so long after the alleged event that the statute of limitations forbade his indictment on that charge. The theory of the law is that, the human memory being the frail and fallible thing it is, no jury could fairly determine whether or not he transmitted confidential government documents to Chambers back in 1938. In spite of his conviction, there are many who believe passionately in Alger Hiss's innocence. That is almost inevitably so in the case of a verdict resting on circumstantial evidence, but it is particularly true when the defendant has an attractive personality, a brilliant record as a public official, and the utmost confidence of former superiors reaching all the way up to the Supreme Court. How much more must it be so when his accuser, the government's chief witness, is an admitted perjurer several times over, a confessed former spy and agent of the Communist underground? If the case hinged alone on the duel between these two, there can hardly be any doubt that the jury would have found for the defendant. But the government had more than Chambers; it had the documents that Chambers produced and the undisputed testimony that many of those papers, copies of original State Department documents, were written on Hiss's typewriter. In two trials the defense was unable to prove that the machine was not in his possession at the time the copies were made or to suggest a plausible explanation of how Chambers might have had access to it. And on that jagged rock the defense foundered. Whether guilty of an essentially political crime or

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by Frank W. Lewis

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the victim of a dreadful miscarriage of justice, Hiss is now the central figure of a dark tragedy. We have thought it proper to withhold comment on that tragedy and on his second trial while the ordeal was in progress. Both will be discussed at length by Robert Bendiner in the next issue of this magazine.

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THE TEMPERATURE OF THE "COLD WAR" HAS risen uncomfortably in the past few weeks. Once again the four-power negotiations for an Austrian treaty are at a standstill, and an appeal to the Russian government by the American, British, and French Ambassadors to end the deadlock appears to have been fruitless. In Berlin the squabble between the eastern and western zones, which led to a "slow-down" on the city's elevated railroads and a threat of a new blockade, has, fortunately, been ended by an American retreat. The trouble started when the United States commandant ordered the seizure of the Railway Administration Building, which is under Soviet control although inside the American sector. Since most of the hundreds of rooms in this building were unoccupied and western Berlin was desperately short of office space, this action was understandable. Nevertheless, as the American authorities seem now to have realized, it was sure to be treated as provocative, and one wonders why they considered so minor an objective worth a new crisis. Another cause of heightened tension between the United States and the Soviet bloc is the Bulgarian demand for recall of the American Minister in Sofia on the ground that he procured information from the executed "traitor," former Deputy Premier Kostov. Naturally the State Department is indignant about a charge which seems to have been invented for propaganda purposes, and it has hinted that if the Bulgarian demand is not withdrawn, this country will end diplomatic relations with Sofia. That would be a defensible move but one which might suit Moscow's book, for there are ominous indications that the Kremlin wishes to close the few chinks that remain in the iron curtain.

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THAT, INDEED, MAY BE THE MOTIVE FOR THE Russian boycott of the Security Council and other United Nations organs, the ostensible purpose of which is to protest against continued representation of the Chinese Nationalist government. According to Thomas J. Hamilton, the exceptionally well-informed correspondent of the *New York Times*, observers at Lake Success have developed the plausible theory that the Russian delegation's tactics are designed to prevent or postpone recognition of the Chinese People's Republic by more Western powers and, in particular, by the United States. Two advantages, it is suggested, might thus be gained: as long as Communist China is excluded from the U. N.,

the Soviet Union will be able to play on the theme of a Western conspiracy against China and minimize contacts between Peking and the non-Soviet world; and if and when the U. N. does admit Communist China, the Russians will be able to claim that their pressure has forced the hand of the "imperialist powers." Whether or not this theory correctly accounts for the Russians' maneuvers, it is all too true that our unrealistic and clumsy diplomacy in China has wedged us tightly into a cleft stick: it is now difficult to make any move that Moscow cannot exploit. However, smart as the Soviet tactics may be from this point of view, they may prove less clever in the long run. With all its faults and weaknesses, the U. N. still represents for millions of ordinary people throughout the world the one hope of staving off another war. They cannot fail to observe that the present effort to hamstring the organization, perhaps to wreck it altogether, consorts ill with Russia's claim to be the chief "peace-loving nation."

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THE POWER OF THE PRESS AND THE POWER of the dollar seldom clash, these days, but they are currently locked in an unusual test of strength in Portland, Oregon. The *Oregonian*, largest newspaper in the Northwest, recently reported an NLRB finding that sustained charges of unfair labor practices against the Meier and Frank Company, the region's biggest department store. Meier and Frank immediately canceled fifty-four advertisements already set in type in the *Oregonian's* composing-room, and has, since the story appeared, reduced its usual advertising in the *Oregonian* by approximately \$7,000 a week. Although the store had successfully twisted the same thumbscrew in the past, this time the *Oregonian* has chosen to carry the issue to its readers. In a front-page announcement it promises to continue to present the news "without fear or favor," regardless of retaliation by Meier and Frank. Civic organizations, led by the trade unions, are supporting the *Oregonian*, and many Portland residents have canceled their Meier and Frank charge accounts. The Retail Clerks' Union, which brought the original charges, reports progress in its drive to organize the store. Charles A. Sprague, a former Oregon governor, has publicly urged Aaron Frank to restore his advertising in the *Oregonian* before he confirms the accusations of "radicals" that big business seeks to control the press. On the other hand, the Portland Chamber of Commerce, which trembles lest a Columbia Valley Authority disturb home rule, has not yet denounced this attempt to intimidate the city's traditionally Republican newspaper. Complicating the situation, unfortunately, is the fact that bigots in Portland, a community which John Gunther found heavy with anti-Semitism, have taken this opportunity to mutter against the department store's Jewish owners.

Churchill's Dilemma

PREPARING to face the voters next month, the British Labor Party paradoxically finds itself somewhat handicapped by the fidelity with which it has fulfilled its pledges at the last general election. Every major plank in the platform it then adopted has since been translated into legislation. The key industries it marked for public ownership have been nationalized; a comprehensive social-security system has been established; a complete national health service has been organized and is operating successfully.

So large an accomplishment has created difficulties for the drafters of a new program, and, in fact, it has not been possible for Labor to assemble as urgent and exciting a collection of projects as it did in 1945. Some new nationalization schemes are being put forward, notably for the sugar-refining and cement industries, which are both very tight private monopolies, but although these proposals have greatly agitated the opposition press and the business interests concerned, they are not likely to become crucial issues in the campaign. With regard to extensions of the social services and further improvements in living standards, the party manifesto, "Let Us Go Forward Together," is understandably cautious. In view of Britain's unsolved balance-of-payments problem, it will not be easy for Labor in the near future to do much more than consolidate social gains already made. Further progress, the manifesto states frankly, depends on continued expansion of production.

But while chary of making promises, the party can with some confidence invite the electors to "look at the record." "Labor's election banner," the *London Times* of January 18 said editorially, "bears two devices: full employment and 'fair shares.' They are shrewdly chosen. Work for all and equal rations are to many millions the consolation of a threadbare peace time. They have brought much credit to the government, however much chance facts and foreign aid may have contributed to keeping up employment, however limited in size each fair share may still be. . . . With the benefits brought by the national health service, whatever its shortcomings and expense, they are Labor's greatest assets."

The Tory Party realizes the need to depreciate those assets in the minds of the voters if it is to regain power. Mr. Churchill in his broadcast of January 21 made that clear when he denied that Labor ministers deserved any credit for advances in social security. They had, he declared scornfully, merely "mauled and twisted" plans drawn up by the war-time National government. And if full employment had been maintained, it was thanks to American and Commonwealth aid and to the backlog of tasks left by the war. Moreover, Mr. Churchill insisted, on this question "there is no real difference between the political parties," for the prevention of

mass unemployment would be "the most solemn duty" of a Tory government. As for social security, he assured his listeners that his party stood for the establishment and maintenance of "a basic standard of life and labor" which would "be the first care of the state and have priority over all other peace-time requirements."

All this Mr. Churchill promised, and a private-enterprise heaven too—an end to "the Socialist policy of equalizing misery and organizing scarcity" and "a greater measure of freedom of choice and action to our people." Just how maintenance of the welfare state and full employment were to be reconciled with the restoration of free enterprise, he did not explain.

When Mr. Churchill implies that his return to Downing Street would be followed by the speedy abolition of most if not all controls and restrictions, he undoubtedly appeals to many among the estimated third of the British population who have suffered from "leveling down." But he must also win support among the other two-thirds, who have found a fair share of austerity more ample than an unfair share of pre-war "plenty," and want to be sure that if they intrust the cutting of the national pie to the Tories, they will not be given smaller slices. Mr. Churchill hopes to persuade them that more economic "freedom" would produce a much larger pie and bigger pieces for everybody, but past experience has induced considerable skepticism on this point. Moreover, as Keith Hutchison points out on page 84, British production is actually expanding at an abnormally rapid rate, and it is not easy to believe that a change in government and methods would bring about a still greater acceleration of output.

It is improbable, therefore, that a Tory government would be able to ease the British lot by making available a greater total volume of goods. If it relaxed controls and cut taxation without introducing deflationary measures, prices would climb rapidly; if it guarded against this contingency by restricting credit and reducing government expenditures on food subsidies and the social services (as advocated by the *Economist*), it would create unemployment and lower working-class standards. In either case it would not really eliminate austerity; it would simply change its incidence. The fact is that the Tories cannot, as they claim, retain the popular features of Labor's policy and at the same time satisfy the demands of their followers for a retreat toward capitalism. Fair shares and full employment are the essence of British socialism, and they cannot be guaranteed except by Socialist methods.

Can the Left Come Back?

Two further articles in an examination of European socialism today by J. ALVAREZ DEL VAYO. The first appears next week.

Mr. Acheson Capitulates

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

IN THE New York *Herald Tribune* last Friday the Alsops devoted their whole column to a glorification of Dean Acheson as Secretary of State. On another page of the same paper Mr. Acheson himself effectively impeached their judgment. His letter to Senator Connally favoring the restoration of full diplomatic relations with Franco Spain was not the utterance of a "great" Secretary of State. At best it was an attempt to appease the right-wing critics of the Administration's Far Eastern policy by tossing them a sop. At worst, and I believe the worst represents the true intent, he was initiating an effort to save the Franco regime from imminent collapse. Unless one or both of these purposes was present, his letter is utterly bereft of motive, for the matter in itself has no immediate urgency, since the United Nations resolution recommending the exclusion of Franco representatives from U. N. agencies and the recall of Ambassadors and Ministers from Madrid cannot in any case be rescinded until the next meeting of the General Assembly, presumably in the autumn. Would it not have been normal then, other considerations aside, for Mr. Acheson to have suggested to Mr. Connally that the Spanish issue be put over to a more proximate date? But it is obvious that other considerations were not "aside"; they were sharply to the front. And because they could not be frankly stated (one can hardly hear Mr. Acheson saying: "Look, boys, I'll swap you Franco for Formosa; how'll that be?"), the State Department was forced to fabricate one of the most contradictory, unconvincing documents recently issued.

For the other considerations are urgent even if unspoken. First, the Administration's whole foreign program is threatened by a bi-partisan opposition more effective than any coalition Mr. Acheson can now confidently command. Last week's vote on the Korean appropriation was a sharp warning of obstacles ahead. The impulse to buy off the diehard isolationist-nationalists is naturally strong and can be countered on practical grounds only by reminding the Secretary, who is a good and experienced lawyer, that blackmail seldom pays off; Congressmen and others who want to finance a return engagement for Chiang Kai-shek will not be shut up with the promise of a dole for Franco. Second, however, there is plenty of direct pressure on the Administration for help for Franco. Not only the various self-appointed Congressional emissaries who brought back word of Spain's needs and Franco's virtues, not only the military crowd who want Spain in their pocket just in case, not only the Vatican whose agents operate openly in and around the Capitol and the executive departments; in addition to these, important industrial

and agricultural interests—cotton and wheat in particular—are clamoring to do business with the hungry, bankrupt fascist state, if only Mr. Acheson will see to it that they get paid in dollars. To have ignored these pressures in order to hold the wavering anti-Franco line would have taken political courage and leadership.

IT WOULD have been naive, perhaps, to look for these qualities in men like President Truman and Secretary Acheson who have never regarded Spain as anything more than an awkward legacy from the days when fascism was the enemy; a rallying symbol for nations which had fought to liberate themselves from occupation and terror, and therefore subject to certain rather troublesome taboos. The cold war increased the pressures and robbed the symbol of whatever potency it had held for our top officials. To them Franco is surely no more unpalatable than Tito, whom we have recognized, or than Mao, whom we shall undoubtedly recognize soon, while on the other hand the Caudillo is prepared to serve "our side" in the task of containing Russia and defeating communism. Dress him up in a few liberties and financial scruples and you have a ruler who may presently become "acceptable" to Western Europe "as an associate" in the E. R. P. and the Council of Europe, to say nothing—and Mr. Acheson carefully says nothing—of the Atlantic Pact.

In other words, the Secretary of State openly discusses Franco's government as a potential ally, although to qualify, he suggests, it must respond to the "frank and friendly efforts" we have been making to persuade it to take "steps toward democratic government." But meanwhile, pending such response, the State Department has been doing its best to help Franco economically. For the first time the American people are told, in Mr. Acheson's letter, that in order "to facilitate normal business and trade with Spain" . . . "the negotiation of a new treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation was offered by the United States." This while Spain remains outlawed by the United Nations and while this country ostensibly supported that position by refraining from sending an Ambassador to Madrid!

General Franco, Mr. Acheson admits, has shown no interest in our offer, nor has he heeded various admonitions from Washington to reform his financial practices. But even so, and even though our government opposes general loans to the Spanish regime, we are "prepared to acquiesce in the extension of credits to Spain covering specific and economically justifiable projects."

ALL of which explodes Mr. Acheson's contention that a vote in favor of restoring full diplomatic relations would "in no sense signify approval of the regime in Spain" but would merely mean "a return to normal practice in exchanging diplomatic representa-

tion." For the resolution adopted by the United Nations in 1946 was, as he points out, a break with normal practice; for this very reason it constituted a moral and political judgment which obviously would be reversed if the resolution should be rescinded. And the desire of the State Department to annul that judgment against Franco is made amply clear in the revelation that it has already been angling for a trade pact and meanwhile is ready to grant credits to Spain "on the same basis as [to] any other country." It is a simple fact, attested to by our consistent policy in Eastern Europe, that the Export-Import Bank grants no credits to countries which the State Department does not wish to support politically; *vide*, until recently, Yugoslavia.

Mr. Acheson's other chief argument for his new policy—that the action of the United Nations should be abandoned because it had only "served to strengthen the position of the present regime" in Spain—collapses of its own hollowness. If diplomatic pressure fortified Franco's rule, will the restoration of normal relations perhaps bring about his downfall? And is that what Mr. Acheson is after? The balance of the letter hardly suggests any such aim! When one considers this argument against the facts, it becomes even more unreal.

For the facts are these. The Franco regime has never since 1945 been nearer collapse than it is today. So rotten with corruption, so blatant in its contrasts of wealth and misery, so brutal in its repressions, so utterly bankrupt is Spain's dictatorship, that it no longer has credit even with its allies. For the first time since 1945 anti-fascists inside Spain and in exile felt the imminence of change. And with the end of Franco the way would be open for a final reckoning with fascism. Left alone, the regime would fall; this much at least seems clear. Mr. Acheson says the Spanish people resent a policy that has been represented as "foreign interference in Spanish internal affairs." But who has now interfered in Spain? The plain truth that shines through the obfuscations of his letter is that the Secretary of State has stepped in to save Franco. Perhaps he will succeed.

But also he may fail. There are men and women in this country who still regard Franco as a symbol with meaning. In Europe organized labor and all the democratic parties are pledged against an attempt to bring fascist Spain back into the community of nations. The Spaniards resisting Franco inside and outside the country must have been shocked, if they are still capable of shock, by the action of a man they had come to regard as liberal and well-meaning. They will certainly be driven to more desperate extremes in their attempts to overthrow the regime. Mr. Acheson thinks the Spanish issue has been exaggerated and kept alive by "organized propaganda." His action has done more to insure that it will not be allowed to die than any propagandists could possibly have accomplished.

FEPC: Acid Test for Republicans

BY PAT M. HOLT

Washington, January 18

ON ALMOST the anniversary of last year's civil-rights battle in the Senate, Administration leaders hope to make Republicans eat the votes with which they overturned Vice-President Barkley's common-sense decision on the cloture rule. The chosen instrument is the Fair Employment Practices bill, the most contentious but also the most inescapable item on the President's civil-rights program. FEPC comes high on the Senate leadership's priority list for the coming session. The ramifications of this high billing may turn into the best political story of 1950.

If Majority Leader Scott W. Lucas carries out his announced intention of pressing FEPC to a showdown roll call, he will have Senate Republicans on a most uncomfortable spot. They may be able to wriggle off for the time being, with the aid of their Dixiecrat allies and a set of Senate rules made to order for befogging issues, but eventually they must either put up votes or shut up talk on civil rights.

When it was announced last fall that the Administration had chosen FEPC for its do-or-die stand on civil rights in 1950, cynics charged that the less controversial anti-lynching and anti-poll-tax bills had been sidetracked for fear they might pass. FEPC could safely be debated, since there was no chance of getting enough Republican votes to stifle Southern oratory against it. The Administration Democrats would make their record, and the issue could be kept alive for use as vote-bait another day.

This theory has been fostered by the Senate Republican leadership, which ignores the fact that if the Republicans chose to live up to their platform, the Senate could pass the whole civil-rights program. Minority Leader Kenneth S. Wherry led off on the G. O. P. line as soon as he returned to Washington. "Everyone, including Scott Lucas, knows anti-lynching legislation has a better chance of passage than FEPC," Wherry said at a press conference. "I believe in taking up a bill we can pass."

Lucas's part in writing the 1948 Democratic platform is also cited as evidence of his ulterior motives in selecting FEPC. At the Philadelphia convention Lucas opposed the Humphrey platform amendments spelling out the civil-rights plank and fought instead for a hazy compromise along the lines of the 1944 platform. It should not be forgotten, however, that he was merely

following the White House line: the same position was taken by J. Howard McGrath, then Democratic national chairman. When taxed with insincerity, Lucas simply answers that FEPC is the only civil-rights bill ready for action. The Administration doesn't like the way the anti-lynching bill is drawn and hesitates to push a measure which it admits needs amending.

THE showdown on FEPC will come with a motion to close debate. Largely owing to Wherry's machinations last year, this motion now requires the affirmative vote of sixty-four Senators, two-thirds of the total. It is idle to talk of keeping the Senate in session all day and all night until somebody gives in. Twenty-odd Southerners in full cry could filibuster for months, even on a twenty-four-hour schedule. If cloture is to be successful, an overwhelming majority of the Republicans will have to vote with the Administration Democrats. Administration leaders honestly don't know whether or not they will get these votes. They are none too optimistic, but they intend to leave no doubt about where the responsibility lies if they fail.

Of all the civil-rights measures, FEPC is the one calculated to attract most Republican support and also to cause most Republican embarrassment. For the Democrats it is the one most likely to pay off immediately with votes where they count most—in the big Northern and Western cities. Northern Negroes support anti-lynching and anti-poll-tax bills as a matter of principle, but they support FEPC as a matter of bread and butter. And so do the Jews, the Mexicans of Knowland's California and Millikin's Colorado, even, in some spots, the Roman Catholics, the Irish and the Italians. A Capehart or a Millikin could vote for an anti-lynching or an anti-poll-tax bill knowing that, so far as his own state was concerned, he was making a politically appealing but meaningless gesture. The trouble with FEPC, from their point of view, is that it would apply to Indiana and Colorado as much as to South Carolina and Louisiana.

Realizing this, the Republicans did their best last year to take the teeth out of the trap the Democrats are now trying to spring on them. With their Dixiecrat allies they forced a monstrous interpretation of the Senate's cloture rule and then hammered home the victory with the amendment requiring the consent of sixty-four Senators to shut off debate. The idea was that Republicans from states with minority groups could safely vote for cloture, while those, such as Wherry, from other

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states, could vote no. The trouble with this idea is that the Republican Party nationally is likely to be held responsible for Wherry.

A ruling promulgated during the Eightieth Congress by Senator Vandenberg as president *pro tem* of the Senate held that the words "pending measure" in the cloture rule did not include motions to consider a bill. As Barkley, then minority leader, pointed out at the time, this meant that the Senate was in the ridiculous position of being able to end debate on a bill but not on a motion to take up the bill.

Early in the Eighty-first Congress, Democrats brought out a resolution saying that the cloture rule meant what everybody had always thought it meant—what, indeed, it had to mean if it was to mean anything. The inevitable filibuster ensued, not on the resolution, but on the motion to consider the resolution. A cloture petition was presented, and a point of order, based on the Vandenberg precedent, was raised that cloture could not apply to the motion. In a cogently argued decision Barkley held that cloture did apply, and owing to a technical difference in the parliamentary situation he managed to do this without directly reversing the Vandenberg in-

terpretation. On appeal the Senate overruled Barkley by forty-six to forty-one. Twenty-three Democrats and twenty-three Republicans made up the majority. Only sixteen Republicans voted with the Administration.

Not content with this victory, the Republicans and Dixiecrats pressed their advantage to force on the Administration a new cloture rule far worse than the old one—incidentally giving poor Scott Lucas one of the worst beatings a majority leader ever took. The new rule provides that cloture can be applied to anything—except another rules change—but requires the approval of two-thirds of the whole Senate instead of merely two-thirds of the Senators voting. It was obvious from the beginning that this virtually ruled out cloture. But Wherry, who disgraces the seat once held by George Norris, dared Lucas to test the new rule. Bring up a civil-rights bill, he said, thinking of the anti-lynching or anti-poll-tax bill, and the Republicans will see to it that you get sixty-four votes for cloture.

Well, Lucas is bringing up a civil-rights bill, and it is hard to see how even Wherry can stretch much farther his infinite capacity for talking out of both sides of his mouth at the same time.

What We Could Do About Asia

BY EDGAR SNOW

QUITE a few Americans have accurately analyzed events in China during the past ten or fifteen years. There was pretty general agreement among them that in 1944 the United States gave up its one real chance to influence the political fate of China in an enlightened way. That was when General Joseph Stilwell was withdrawn as head of the American military effort, after he had made a Homeric struggle for imperative reforms. Thenceforth our vast unconditional aid enabled Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to reestablish his personal monopoly of military power sufficiently to prevent the drastic internal changes which alone could have averted a violent social revolution. When Roosevelt reluctantly repudiated Stilwell and his policies he removed the one obstacle which might have kept the megalomaniac Generalissimo and his sycophants from destroying themselves and identifying our country with their ruin.

Yet even today plenty of distinguished people do not understand what happened in China. Some policy-makers in Washington still doubt that there was ever anything wrong with Chiang Kai-shek. They think he

was destroyed by "false foreign doctrine"; the 400,000,000 Chinese got caught in some mirrors and could not recognize a good leader when they had one. Even that apostle of government economizing, Herbert Hoover, having seen us waste billions of dollars under the delusion that the fate of democracy was linked with the survival of Chiang's profoundly corrupt, incompetent, and backward regime, urged us to renew succor to him in Formosa.

What could be said of our political leadership if after that costly adventure on the mainland we now proclaimed a colonial protectorate over the rich Chinese islands but lately liberated from Japanese imperialism? Is it possible that we have not yet learned the clearest lessons of our China experience—that our intervention failed because it was diametrically opposed to changes for which millions of Chinese were prepared to die? Surely we should be able to grasp this and certain other vivid facts which now determine the immediate future in Asia:

1. The era of colonies is over. Imperialism, the exploitation of economically non-developed nations for the enrichment of private foreign capitalism, is ended.
2. The struggle for political power in colonial nations has already passed out of the simple stage of nationalism

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versus imperialism. It has crossed the threshold of social revolution. The future success of native rivals for national power will depend on how closely they link up the cause of independence with radical social and economic reforms.

3. The revolt of the peasant against the authority of the landlord has become the most important political fact in Asia. How often must it be said that the victory of the Chinese Communists was before everything else the victory of farmers claiming title to the land they till? In Indo-China, Malaya, Java, Siam, Burma, India, Korea, Japan—and finally the Philippines—it will be the same. Whoever gives the peasants security on the land will win their support, and with it will have power.

In the "continent-wide revolutionary process which affects all aspects of human relations," wrote Erich H. Jacoby in his recent penetrating book "Agrarian Unrest in Southeast Asia," "it was the land crisis which paved the way for the national idea. . . . It has become the basis of nationalist movements in all the countries of Southeast Asia." Without agrarian reform and the social innovations that accompany it, no native leadership can long be sustained.

4. Nationally, the agrarian uprising has a new significance in the colonial world. From Manchuria to India the peasant revolt against feudalism, which in Europe Marx considered the dawn of the bourgeois era, has matured a century or two late. Combined with nationalism, it has been catapulted on to a world stage already dominated by the conditions of a socialist or pre-socialist era. Owing to the prolongation of a semi-feudal landlord economy under imperialist rule—and the retarded growth of native capitalism—there is no native owner class strong enough to consolidate nationalist power. The liberated colonial state is built upon a coalition of peasants, small owners, an infant working class, and intellectuals and bureaucrats. And these elements appear to be the logical heir to the principal means of production. To this coalition, in the form of the state, will go eventually the (foreign-owned) mines, the industry, the utilities, the plantations, the resources which in the West, with the end of feudalism, fell into the hands of the private entrepreneur.

5. Economically, this complex of interests in the colonial emancipation movements gives them a unique character. Combining many features of past revolutions, the new nations will not fully correspond to any single pattern. Least of all can we bestow on such countries the economic and political standards and definitions of America. We cannot do so, for we cannot reproduce in them the history which created the United States. An economy based on private exploitation of unsettled land and "free" resources, with resulting rapid industrialization, cannot be duplicated where ancient agrarian so-

cieties, shattered by the impact of industry and science imposed by imperialism, present urgent human problems that must be solved with the help of state power and state planning.

6. Politically, a cross between benevolent paternalism and irresponsible despotism common to the history of most Asiatic countries will persist in some degree in the new states. But mutations cannot be confined to a totalitarian pattern borrowed from Russian experience. It is fantasy to suppose that the emancipated countries will voluntarily sacrifice their economic and political energies to the interests of Russia. In the very period when mass consciousness of the value of all symbols of sovereignty is bringing the colonial and semi-colonial peoples to their feet, as modern states, internal power cannot be stabilized under leadership pledged to serve foreign interests. None of these peoples will become the willing puppets of Russian foreign policy—unless our behavior convinces them that no other way is open to them.

The foregoing generalizations are valid, on different levels, in different degrees, throughout East, Southeast, and Middle Asia. They will soon apply to most of Africa as well, where colonial empires cannot, in any case, survive a third world war.

Most of these tendencies have been apparent for a long time, even to persons with no better sources of information than myself. They are acknowledged by many specialists in the United States foreign service. But they are news to the men who really make our foreign policy; what is worse, they will still be news to them several years from now. And that is why we stand at a dead end today, with some Senators and generals ready to consider a protectorate in Formosa—a proposition firmly rejected by Abraham Lincoln nearly a century ago.

THIS is a poor time to be caught "walking backward into the future." Theoretically at least, we can still turn around. History shows that political wisdom resides in the ability to cooperate with facts, and many of the facts are now far beyond us. A dramatic statement recognizing them, and abandoning the fallacies of the past, is long overdue. If it would be any more palatable to the President, it might be called a "Tru-Deal" for Asia.

One of the first facts we must accept is that China is not Chiang Kai-shek, as we have supposed all along, but the people we have been helping him to fight. If we wish to return to reality and restore contacts with a nation rather than an individual, we should promptly test the offer of the Peking regime to establish relations on terms of complete equality. If it should prove that such relations cannot now be established, the honest effort would at least help to win support for faster action along lines indicated here.

Secondly, the United States should stop equivocating

on the whole subject of colonies. Wherever possible we should actively promote self-government for nations in Africa as well as Asia—and not just insist upon it in the Soviet sphere of Eastern Europe. We should guarantee that our aid to European colonial powers will not be used in wars of colonial oppression. We should offer practical help to remaining empires in preparing their colonies for early independence. In the U. N. we should call for speedy liquidation of the colonial system everywhere.

As an immediate example, the United States should refuse to subsidize the French war in Indo-China. The French are going to be kicked out very soon, and nothing is to be gained by taking the trip with them. In contrast, we should extend generous economic help to free Burma and Indonesia, to encourage them to complete agrarian reforms essential to internal stability.

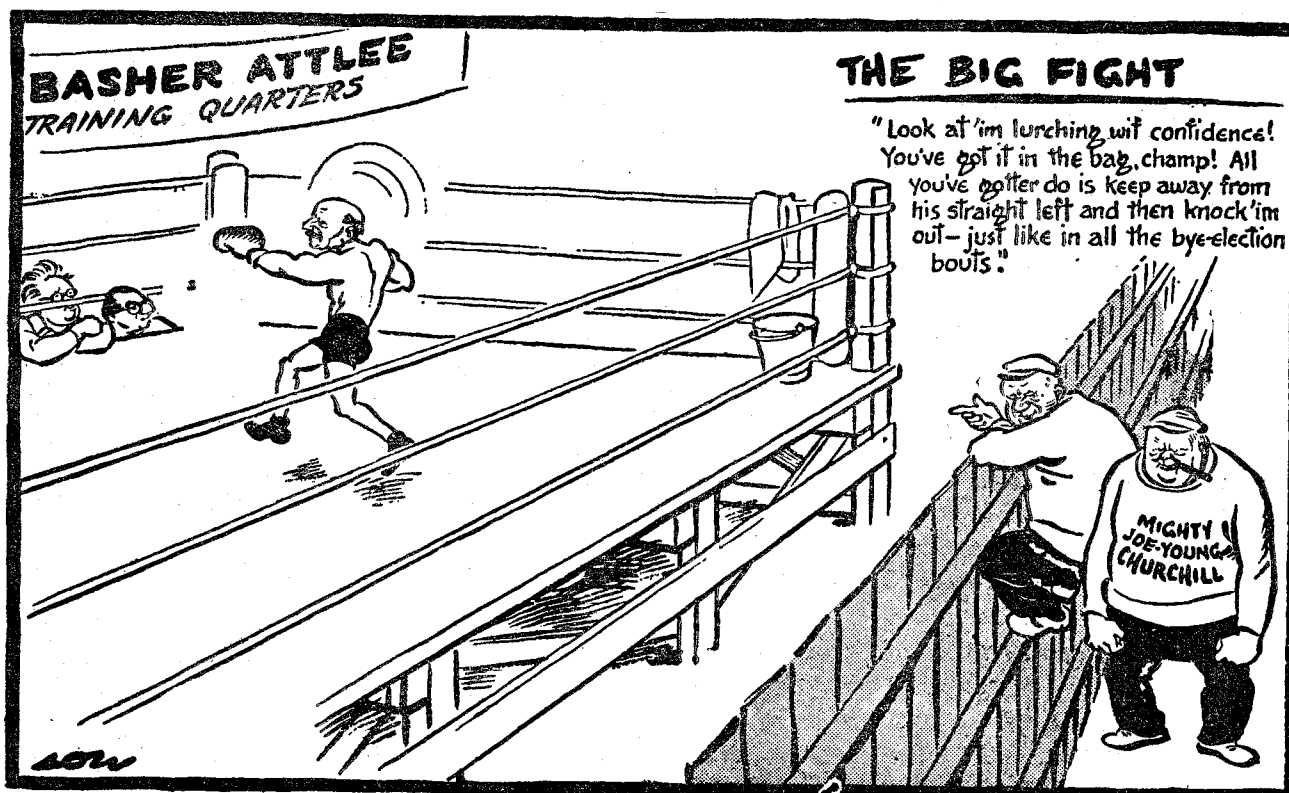
Thirdly, our cultural ties with all the colonial peoples should be officially strengthened. Congress could establish institutes of Asiatic-American studies, with faculties and student bodies composed of both Asiatics and Americans. Foreign teachers, doctors, and scientists should be trained; schools should stress technical subjects of practical value in what the British like to call "the retarded countries." Scholarships should be made available on a large scale to the people of countries prepared to cooperate with the United States in projects to promote economic and cultural growth. Similar institutes should be created to enrich our relations with the peoples of Africa—not after the next war, but now. All such activities should be coordinated with United Na-

tions educational, scientific, and conservation programs, and with popular organizations of an international character.

AS THE key feature of a "Tru-Deal" for colonial, semi-colonial, and newly independent countries, capital, credits, and necessary machinery and technique should be supplied from our abundant accumulations. Truman's Point Four might be called the *primitif* of such a plan, but it needs drastic revision as a mature expression of a "walking forward" policy. It is necessary to eliminate from it a notion irreconcilable with awakened national consciousness everywhere—that is, the crude delusion that popular sentiment abroad welcomes replacement of imperialist capital by American capital operating private concessions for super-profits.

Through the United Nations, and perhaps only through the United Nations, this country should advance new investment capital for use in underdeveloped countries. Regimes in China, Indo-China, Burma, Japan, Korea, Yugoslavia, Israel, India, and Indonesia will increasingly find it politically unwise or impossible to invite private foreign capital to compete even on an equal basis with native capital. They would meet no obstacles in accepting financial and technical help from the U. N. In the long run political conditions in such states will compel them either to expropriate private ownership of their vital means of production, or to convert it into some form of international obligation.

Funds should be made available on far more modest terms than those now offered by the International



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—and with no political conditions beyond faithful adherence to the U. N. Charter. But such capital loans should be protected against unscrupulous officials in the borrower country, who might misuse the help, directly or indirectly, to engage in speculation, monopolization of key state industries, operation of black markets in consumer necessities, and the like—as happened with most American aid to China. Where required, loans should be provided to help governments break the dominance of the landlord-usurer in the economy, develop public resources under public ownership, encourage cooperative farming and production, and carry out other measures necessary to identify popular interests with the stability of the regimes.

U. N. financing of that type could minimize conflicts between the United States—in the role of policeman for cartels, monopolies, and money-lenders—and governments answerable to anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist sentiment in their followers. Americans who invest money in backward states on a concessionaire basis will before long become targets of anti-American agitation. The American people should not assume collective responsibility for the protection of private capital investments abroad.

As a modern alternative, the United States should offer special bonds to attract investment capital, at a interest rate. The proceeds could be converted country's contribution to the loan capital of a United Nations development bank in which all nations would participate. Only this kind of lending can dispel the fear of Britain, France, Holland, and Belgium that America intends to absorb the colonies it asks them to liberate. Those nations could be shown that, on the contrary, they would benefit from increased trade in an ever-growing world market. An army of technicians would be needed to carry out the large-scale development programs envisaged, and UNESCO's existing plan for technical assistance provides a nucleus. Ultimately, a world economic-planning staff would be necessary.

AND this brings us to a fifth requirement, the rudiments of a world government. Congress should heed current popular agitation in this respect and authorize United States membership in a Reviewing Commission, within the framework of the U. N. Charter, to sponsor world federation. Probably it is not in the interest of world stability to use dollar diplomacy to force nations just emerging from subservience to nineteenth-century imperialism to ally themselves with the American "camp," but one alternative could be made exceedingly attractive to all of them—that is, a system of internationalism whose law and power would protect the little and the big, united in a limited world state.

It is possible for the United States to help convert the U. N. into a true world government now. A number

of member states have voted in favor of such a change. If Congress approved American participation, the U. N. Reviewing Commission could convene fairly soon to consider methods of proportional representation. It could work out a constitution providing for planning, legislative, executive, and judicial organs and an effective world police force.

All the foregoing moves, when combined—and they would work *only* in combination—have of course far more than regional implications. They would make possible the beginning of a logical world. Instead of un-American "containment" concepts borrowed from Prussian philosophy—with its neurotic "fear of the barbarian"—we might have a policy expressing the pioneer's faith in the future of man, rooted in early American principles of union for the common good. Such a policy would be anti-Communist in that it would emphatically reject the Kremlin dogma of a world doomed to Stalinism after an inevitable "series of frightful collisions." It would be anti-imperialist because it would everywhere support the independence and self-determination of nations of men as the prerequisite of a secure and peaceful government of man.

Communism cannot be "stopped" today by American guns, planes, or hydrogen bombs used to maintain the status quo—whether represented by native reactionaries like Chiang Kai-shek and Bao Dai or by vestigial European imperialism. Stalinists can be immobilized only by free states of free men conscious of new and real gains to defend. That means that the Asiatic masses—and the masses everywhere—must be given an economic and political stake in a dynamic alternative, a progressive world. The cost of American leadership in such an exciting enterprise might run to several billions of dollars. But many billions in private American capital could also be put to constructive use through the international development bank and its technicians. All peaceful nations could join in a world system in which they would have much to gain and a rich fund of common interests to defend. The moral-political forces generated by such a program would be so formidable as to make war impracticable for any group of minority nations hostile to democratic federation.

THERE is nothing un-American in this modest design. Given the will, the United States could promote it. But does the will exist? Among the people it is at least latent and could be made articulate by wise and energetic leadership. An optimist might even fancy he could detect the conscious expression of such a will in Mr. Truman's State of the Union address to Congress. "Our aim for a peaceful, democratic world of free peoples will be achieved, in the long run," he said, "not by force of arms. . . . If the peace policy of the democratic nations is to be successful, they must demonstrate

that the benefits of their way of life can be increased and extended to all nations and races."

But there he stopped. No means were offered—beyond the paltry "technical-assistance" bill and a vague appeal for a "flow of capital investment to underdeveloped countries." There was no attempt to reconcile the character of economic assistance abroad with the size and shape of the political necessity. And it must be admitted that in real policy-making circles—among the

heads of the armed services, in Congress, and among the lobbies and pressure groups to which Congress responds—it is not yet imagined that such measures are imperative for our own prosperity and security.

All the same, it is good to write down what ought to be done, to define the gap between the need and the performance. As a nation of free men we must occasionally remind ourselves that we need not necessarily behave stupidly. History relentlessly offers alternatives.

Euthanasia—Pro and Con

A Humane Necessity

BY HARRY BENJAMIN

IT SEEMS inconceivable that in a happier world of the future no provision should be made for putting out of their misery persons suffering from an excessively painful and incurable disease. We shall have to find some legal way to accord to human beings the relief we accord to animals.

Euthanasia—or "mercy killing"—can be practiced by commission, which is illegal, or by omission, which is not. A doctor cannot be punished for intentionally neglecting to administer some remedy or stimulant which might prolong life, although he may be accused of incompetence and malpractice. I shall consider here only euthanasia by commission.

The present situation is utterly unfair to the individual physician who believes that the relief of suffering is one of his principal duties. Many medical practitioners undoubtedly resort to euthanasia, but since they do so secretly it is impossible to say how many. They feel compelled to commit a technical "murder" even though they must bear the whole responsibility. That is the unfair part. Situations like the recent one in New Hampshire must arise frequently, and why in that case the doctor reported his act is difficult to understand. (Why, too, did he inject air instead of merely giving an overdose of morphine?) Bigots and sticklers for legal technicalities will always try to prevent or punish humanitarian action by an individual physician. Since the decision rests with him alone, the doctor will rarely ask for the consent of either the patient or the relatives. The mercy killing is therefore done furtively, when it should be done candidly, serenely, and lawfully.

None of the various arguments against euthanasia have ever shaken my belief in its truly humane purpose. In the space at my disposal I can refer only to a few. One of the most frequently heard but also most super-

ficial objections is that the Nazis practiced euthanasia. What loose thinking! The Nazis never asked the consent of patients or relatives. There was no mercy in their killings, only expediency.

The contention that a seemingly incurable condition might some day be cured by a new medical discovery hardly holds water. How can the hopeless cancer victim or the imbecile child of today benefit by a discovery of tomorrow? The laws regulating euthanasia must of course be flexible, and requirements based on present knowledge may be changed in the future.

Another objection to euthanasia stems from the possibility of fraud and abuse. But if the decision on "merciful release" is left to a government-appointed board of at least three persons—for instance, two medical men and one lawyer, who must be unanimous in its favor—this seems a weak argument. Surely legal experts can devise adequate safeguards.

There will always remain the opposition of those who cling to sentimental superstitions about the sacredness of life. Such an emotional attitude cannot be changed by any reasoning. But let me give an example of the "sacredness of life."

A friend of mine, a professional man in his late sixties, suffered from an inoperable cancer of the liver which caused great accumulation of water in the abdominal cavity. At least once a week his abdomen had to be tapped to relieve the pressure. He suffered also from a chronic inflammation of the heart muscle, and the resulting circulatory weakness added to the complete hopelessness of the case. Bedridden in a hospital, he was kept alive by medical skill and expert nursing. Physicians and nurses did their duty. Sedatives were used, but in small doses they were often ineffective, and large doses were deemed contra-indicated.

My friend was not a man of means but had managed to save a few thousand dollars for his wife and for a handicapped child. His savings dwindled from week to week. The hospital expenses were high. The bill for oxygen alone, which he required frequently, was more than \$20 a week. He was anxious to die to end his

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suffering and to preserve at least part of his savings. But he was a religious man and rejected any idea of suicide. He did not approve of euthanasia. He could only pray that death might come soon. When he was down to his last few dollars and had to worry how he would pay his next hospital bill and how his wife would pay the next month's rent, then and only then did death come. There was not enough money left to bury him.

In this case even legalized euthanasia would have been out of the question since the religious convictions of the patient himself, and probably also of his wife, would have prevented him from making the application or giving his consent. But in innumerable cases such religious convictions do not exist.

I could have made this story a more effective argument for euthanasia by having the patient beg in vain for release, but I wanted to report a true experience. It is easy for the reader to visualize the increased suffering and the heightened tragedy when euthanasia is desired and unmercifully denied by society.

Euthanasia has been called "pagan" and "indecent." One may well ask, which is better—pagan mercifulness, indecent compassion, or devout inhumanity?

A False Mercy

BY MARTIN GUMPERT

EUTHANASIA is humane and merciful as an idea. It might be inhumane and dangerous as a practice. A progressive society should limit its power over human beings instead of expanding it. Strangely enough, many people who denounce capital punishment are in favor of euthanasia.

Legalizing euthanasia would be a disservice to the medical profession in that it would expand the power and responsibility of physicians, which are already almost unbearably great. The legal conditions proposed—consent of the patient or his family, decision by a state commission—would create psychological and technical situations beyond human endurance.

Millions of people today live a hopeless and painful, even a socially useless, life without the benefit of an incurable disease. Should they be permitted to be candidates for euthanasia? Suffering is more easily accepted by the patient who really has a painful disease than by the neurotic person who produces his misery and pain by emotional processes. Even the incapacitated, agonized patient, in despair most of the time, may still get some joy from existence. His mood will change between longing for death and fear of death. Who would want to decide what should be done on such unsafe ground?

Last summer in Germany I witnessed a number of

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so-called euthanasia trials. The Nazis and their medical hangmen had murdered many thousands of mental patients, epileptics, feeble-minded, physically handicapped, "asocial" persons. Of course these crimes had no resemblance to the euthanasia some people want legalized. There was no consent, no indication—in most cases—of unbearable suffering. However, the mass murder was justified as "euthanasia," and one cannot help being deeply disturbed by the attitude of apparently honest physicians toward the orders of a perverted government and by the potential dangers of euthanasia as an instrument of public health.

"Hopeless" or "incurable" disease is an outmoded medical concept. We have seen in our lifetime a great number of incurable diseases become curable. Cancer may be curable the day after our application for euthanasia is signed.

It is also possible that undue influence would be exercised by the patient's family. Suffering may seem more unbearable to the sensitive onlooker than to the sufferer himself. Chronic disease is always a social catastrophe whether death is imminent or not. Families are disrupted; their economic security is destroyed. But it is a sinister thought that economic considerations might influence the decision as to life or death. Death, in our society, has already too much taken on the character of an important financial transaction; a physician must frequently deal with patients who insist that they can afford death because of their insurance provisions, but not life with an incapacitating incurable disease. It seems clear to me that a public health-insurance system should lessen the risk and the tragedy of chronic disease, but euthanasia is not a tolerable substitute for social and medical assistance.

The weapons of medicine for fighting pain and alleviating unbearable suffering have increased beyond any expectation. There is, indeed, no place for unbearable pain in modern medicine. If people die in torment it is because qualified medical or nursing care is unavailable. I have often been appalled by the undignified and careless way in which people are forced to die. Help in making birth easier is today a matter of routine, and almost no child comes into the world without expert assistance. Dying is often very difficult. It seems to me there ought to be well-trained death helpers among doctors and nurses just as there are birth helpers. But what is needed is wise guidance in the tremendous human experience of death, not the fulfilment of a more or less self-imposed death sentence by euthanasia.

Much can be done to integrate death into everybody's existence, to make our departure from human society as natural an event as our entrance. But I greatly doubt that legalized euthanasia is the best means. As a physician, I feel I would have to reject the power and responsibility of the ultimate decision.

DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

V. Chaos on Our Doorstep

BY OVIDIO GONDI

IT IS a curious fact that the Latin American republics closest to the United States, with the exception of Mexico, are the ones most neglected by the press and public opinion of this country. Happenings in Central America are all but ignored; yet economic and political changes in that area have an immediate bearing on the security of the United States. At present Central America is unstable and backward, but it has untapped wealth and is capable of developing substantial markets and a decent standard of living. It is time the United States paid more attention to its nearest neighbors.

In 1944, even before the world war ended, unrest seized the people of the five Central American countries and set off a series of democratic revolutions. That the years which followed have not brought the liberty demanded in 1944 is due to disunity, lack of disinterested capable leadership, financial corruption, control by outside capitalist interests, and the overwhelming poverty and ignorance of the masses.

Many Central Americans, dazzled by the example of the United States, believe that prosperity and democratic rule could be achieved if the five republics formed a federation. Together they have a population smaller than that of the state of Illinois, but they occupy an area as large as Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana combined. With frontiers abolished and an adequate plan for the development of power, agriculture, and mining, Central America, it is thought, could raise its standard of living and perhaps get rid of rule by colonels. This change, however, would be opposed by native politicians and by certain foreign investors who benefit from the low wages and political instability of the small republics.

Let us examine the conditions in each of these countries. The economy of Honduras, the poorest and least developed of the five states, is based on bananas, which form 50 per cent of all exports. The United Fruit Company owns the 900-mile-long railroad and controls the other principal means of transportation, as well as the port facilities. World War II brought a flow of money from the United States and a fleeting prosperity to some countries, but for the people of Honduras it meant only greater poverty than before. Banana cultivation was

reduced when ships became scarce, the docks were deserted, and thousands of peasants and stevedores were thrown out of work. Disorders occurred, and bitterness developed against the foreign companies. Feeling was intensified when the United Fruit Company in 1943 decided it was no longer profitable to exploit the region between Puerto Castilla and Puerto de la Ceiba, a stretch of sixty-five miles where some two thousand peasant families lived. The company railroad was the only way these people had of reaching their markets. As a gesture of desperation they lay down on the railroad tracks to prevent them from being torn up. The company asked for the protection of government troops, which moved into action and killed several peasants. A last attempt to overthrow the despotic Tiburcio Carias Andino, in October, 1944, was unsuccessful.

In Guatemala the Revolutionary Junta which took power in October, 1944, has protected legitimate foreign interests, but it has not allowed the interests of the nation and the people to suffer. At the beginning of 1949 a tense situation arose when the 15,000 employees of the United Fruit Company demanded higher wages, a minimum of from \$1.20 to \$1.36 a day as against the 90 cents paid previously. The United Fruit Company refused the increase, and the government wisely decided to submit the dispute to a court of arbitration. After long and contentious negotiation, a compromise award was handed down by the arbitrators and accepted.

Reactionaries have accused President Arevalo of suppressing the opposition and muzzling the press, but this is not true. When the Revolutionary Junta assumed power it promulgated a number of decrees putting in effect its social and political program and convoked a Constituent Assembly which drew up a new liberal constitution. The present government was chosen in elections which were a model of fairness and in which Juan José Arevalo won four times as many votes as his four opponents combined. The opposition is well represented in the Assembly and at times has had a controlling vote. So far the former philosophy professor has shown that he knows how to defend himself, having put down some twenty military insurrections.

Another representative of progressive liberalism in Central America is José Figueres of Costa Rica. A wealthy landowner, Figueres practices among the peasants who work for him some of the Socialist theories he preaches. During the administration of Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia (1940-44) and Teodoro Picado

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(1944-48) he supported the opposition. He held that the liberal labor code promulgated by Calderón Guardia could be made effective only by a thorough economic housecleaning. Furthermore, he detested the Communists, who supported Calderón and whose opportunism led them to make a pact with the Archbishop of San José, Monsignor Victor Manuel Sanabria.

In 1948 the opposition candidate, Otilio Ulate, owner of a daily newspaper of San José, was elected to the presidency, but Picado would not relinquish the office. Thereupon José Figueres took up arms against him, at the head of a little band of peasants from his own land. At first his force consisted of 125 men armed with 7 rifles, and their number never reached a thousand. But the rebellion succeeded, Picado was ousted, and as a temporary measure, until order and a liberal regime were assured, Figueres set up a Revolutionary Junta.

From the start Figueres stressed his progressive, semi-Socialist economic ideas. Inevitably an ever-widening breach opened between Ulate and the younger leader. Around Ulate have gathered the conservative elements

which would like to clip Figueres' wings. They made their first attempt in April, 1949, when War Minister Edgard Cardona called out the troops of one of the barracks in an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the junta. The junta's program called for the extension of cultivation from the heavily overpopulated central plain to other regions of the country, together with the construction of many new roads. On June 22, 1948, the banks were nationalized. At the same time the junta imposed a tax of 10 per cent on all incomes above 50,000 *colones* (\$10,000). It had already announced the nationalization of the electric companies.

In September, 1948, Figueres realized the obstacles which his program faced. Business men began to withdraw their accounts from the banks, unemployment increased in consequence, and many activities were paralyzed. Yet Figueres insisted that everything that had the character of a public utility must be nationalized.

In the end, to his great credit, Figueres kept his promise and permitted Ulate to take office without a struggle. Congressional elections resulted in an Ulate victory, possibly because the Social Democratic Party which backed Figueres was poorly organized and financed. The government is stable and moderately liberal. Figueres, meanwhile, has retired from politics, but his followers predict an early reappearance, for he is still immensely popular among the people.

LOOKING BACKWARD

Seventy-five Years Ago in "The Nation"

THE February number of *Popular Science Monthly* contains Professor Tyndall's "Reply to the Critics of the Belfast Address." The reply . . . is largely devoted to a vigorous attack on the Holy Father and the church which he represents, and to an exposition of the ignorance and superstition of the professors of the Catholic faith. . . . As [Mr. Tyndall] recapitulates the grievous scientific errors and mortal sins into which the church has at different times fallen—the ringing of the church-bells all over Europe to scare away Halley's comet in 1456, the decree of 1616 denouncing the Copernican system and "suspending" all books teaching it, the persecution of Galileo, and so on—the reader, if he is a scientific man or a Protestant, cannot but feel a glow of satisfaction in reflecting that he is not absurd enough to be a Catholic. . . .

To what lengths . . . the Papal party in Germany are ready to go . . . may be conjectured from the fact that one of their leading organs . . . declares that "the Pope has the right to depose sovereigns even now, and is likely to exercise this right in future," and then goes on to explain in what contingencies. The present German sovereign, having been "baptized in the name of God," he is not likely to interfere with, but if any one of them was to become a Turk, or a Unitarian, or licentious like . . . Queen Elizabeth, "the great female assassin," there would be "no reason why the Pope should not use his power and send such princes to the right-about. . . ." It must be admitted that Christians like these will be none the worse for an occasional visit from the police.—January 28, 1875.

NEXT door in Nicaragua President Somoza became alarmed at the news from San José. For him Figueres was a nightmare. He used every means at his command, including the Guardia Nacional and bands of Costa Rican exiles, to stop Figueres when the latter was advancing on the Costa Rican capital. His alarm increased when he learned that a handful of men, some 150 in all, representing fourteen Central American and Caribbean countries together with a group of Spanish republicans, were siding with Figueres and had sworn to take Managua, the Nicaraguan capital, on their way to Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, in a drive to dislodge the Central American dictators. This was the start of the so-called Caribbean Legion, lately accused by Trujillo of plotting his overthrow.

Grandson of a notorious bandit who was hanged in the public square of Managua exactly a century earlier, General Somoza became President of Nicaragua in 1936. The country seems doomed to support him since the opposition is equally detested. Equally reactionary also, the opposition is led by General Emiliano Chamorro, who once ruled with the help of foreign bayonets. The Liberals, now in power, are divided, but Somoza has succeeded in splitting the Conservatives too, and one section collaborates with him.

General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez ruled El Salvador from 1931 to 1944. He owed everything to

former President Arturo Araujo, who first made him Minister of War and then Vice-President. When Araujo was warned not to trust Martínez, the President laughed and said, "Don't worry, he likes me. Don't forget it was I who taught him how to eat and to wear stockings. I myself had him married in the chapel of the palace." But six months after Araujo came to power, Martínez did not hesitate to betray him and become dictator.

The Second World War brought a flow of new money into El Salvador, but it was difficult to get consumers' goods. So a group of business men established factories for the manufacture of textiles and planned others for the processing of agricultural products. They also projected an electric-power plant on the River Lempa, at a cost of \$30,000,000. In 1944 industrial activity was at its height, but an agricultural crisis had developed. As usual industrialization had been pushed at the expense of the planters. The workers in the cities, with inadequate labor legislation to protect them, were unable to win higher pay in spite of increased prices and the favorable position of business.

At this uncomfortable moment two diametrically opposed personalities, Agustín Alfaro and Arturo Romero, appeared on the political scene. Dr. Romero was an ardent leftist, without definite political affiliation but deeply concerned over the miserable condition of the people of El Salvador. From his poor patients, who made up the majority of his practice, he took no fees, even paying in many cases for the medicines he prescribed. Alfaro on the contrary was a millionaire, a member of the Coffee Growers' Association, and ready to use every means in his power to reestablish this group's hold on the economy of the country. He had connections with a group of army officers eager for power.

Romero, thinking only of the need for a radical change, agreed to join Alfaro and his friends in a rebellion against the government. The uprising broke out but was suppressed within a few hours. Hundreds of men were executed, and Romero was saved from the firing squad only because he had been severely wounded.

In the next month a simple general strike brought down the regime of General Hernández Martínez, and Romero was proclaimed the candidate of the Unión Democrática. But instead of an orderly election the overthrow of Martínez led to a succession of coups and plots, including the establishment in Guatemala of a Salvadoran government in exile. An attempt to invade El Salvador, led by Romero, was frustrated through the intervention of the Honduran President, Carias Andino. Thus the dictators stick together when despotism is threatened! The reactionary candidate for the presidency of El Salvador, Casteñada Castro, was promptly elected without opposition.

Occasionally political disturbances in Central America are blamed on "Communist intervention." Nothing

could be more remote from the truth. Unrest in that area is confusingly free of any kind of ideological basis. The only Communist Party that has achieved any political stature whatever is that of Costa Rica, and to do this it has had to make enormous compromises. When the Comintern was dissolved on March 22, 1943, the tiny Costa Rican party, headed by the capable lawyer Manuel Mora Valverde, became the Vanguardia Popular, after which it formed its alliance with the church.

From the time Russia entered the war until shortly after its close, the few Communists in Central America were enthusiastic supporters of the constituted regimes, maintaining that opposition activities might endanger the war effort. They even sought an understanding with Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in El Salvador, and called Romero's movement fascist. Later, when Martínez fell and it appeared likely that Romero was on his way to the presidency, the Communists switched their support to him. In Nicaragua the Socialist Party, which has Communist leanings, has consistently opposed any revolt against Somoza, while Arnaldo Ferreto, a leader of the Vanguardia Popular in Costa Rica, urged Nicaraguan workers and peasants, together with business men and other conservative groups, to get together, "take their lead from Somoza, and march forward on the highway of progress."

THAT the political situation in Central America is chaotic and the outlook darker by many shades than in 1944 is evident. As 1950 begins, only two countries show real signs of democratic vitality—Guatemala and Costa Rica. Even in these two the left and liberal elements, now in power, are threatened by reactionary interests determined to reverse the start made toward social legislation and protection of the rights of workers and peasants. In Guatemala the parties that put Arevalo in power are now divided but have probably enough strength to elect the next President. The left candidate, García Granados, was Guatemala's able and liberal representative in the U. N. General Assembly until the last session.

The paucity of first-rate leaders and parties representing coherent progressive programs in Central America is inevitable in an area which has been kept in a state of feudal backwardness by the combined efforts of indigenous dictators, foreign exploiters, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. What is most needed is the interest and honest support of progressives in this country, especially of the organized workers and their political allies in Washington. Central America is still economically a colonial dependency of the United States. Its struggle for political freedom and a decent share of the wealth it produces will succeed only if the power of American capital is directed toward raising the people's standard of living.

Can Science Survive the Atom?

BY LEONARD ENGEL

LAST winter the Atomic Energy Commission finally launched a real program for developing atomic power for industrial and scientific purposes. Then came the Russian achievement of an atomic explosion and the race to produce more bombs. As a reply to the Soviet blast, President Truman is seeking a special fund of \$128,000,000 outside the regular AEC budget—and in addition to an earlier special allocation of \$30,000,000—for a further expansion of the commission's facilities for making bombs. We would do better to use this sum to harness the atom for peace.

Russia's possession of the bomb has, in fact, made it imperative to shift our atomic-energy program in a non-military direction. The U. S. S. R.'s strongest challenge is likely to be based not on its production of bombs, in which we have a commanding margin, even without the dread hydrogen bomb, but on its use of atomic energy in industry. This is precisely the area in which our own effort is weakest. Yet in the long run the scientific and industrial exploitation of atomic energy will have a more beneficial effect on our military position, as well as on our daily lives, than any number of bombs.

At the risk of seeming to imply that we must be guided by what the Russians do, I should like to start out with a few remarks about their achievements in this field. The Russians could not have set up their equivalent of the Manhattan District before 1945; they thus took only four years to complete their first bomb. Since the work had to be carried on simultaneously with post-war reconstruction and since the U. S. S. R.'s technical resources are limited compared with ours, short cuts must have been employed. The most obvious would be concentration on one type of bomb—the plutonium bomb rather than the uranium-235 bomb, as the former can be manufactured with simpler equipment. The Russian weapon, then, is probably a plutonium bomb.

Since the U. S. S. R. has access to smaller amounts of uranium ore than the United States, it cannot rival us in the accumulation of bombs. But its concentration upon the plutonium bomb confers a certain advantage. The manufacture of plutonium is directly connected with the generation of atomic power, while the separation of isotopes for the U-235 bomb is not; the atomic "furnaces" of tomorrow's industry will be chiefly plutonium-producing reactors. The U. S. S. R. may therefore be already ahead of us in the application of atomic-

energy to peace-time uses. The Russians undoubtedly mean to transform their liabilities into assets by devoting a larger share of their atomic effort than we do to non-military developments. They do not consider the atomic bomb militarily decisive in any event, while the early production of practicable atomic power is a tempting prospect to an under-industrialized country.

Meanwhile, what has been happening here? Three years ago the McMahon act ended direct military control of the atom and endowed a civilian commission with the monopoly of all phases of atomic development, military and non-military, plus authority to conduct or support basic scientific research that might contribute to the atomic-energy program. The AEC has grown into one of the nation's most imposing enterprises, with plants worth \$3,000,000,000 and an annual budget exceeding \$800,000,000. About \$100,000,000 a year is spent on research, mainly in the commission's own laboratories, but a sizable sum also goes to support work in universities. The McMahon act was a substantial step forward, but it has by no means accomplished the demilitarization of the atom. Since it made the development and production of bombs the first charge upon the AEC, it has had the effect of tying non-military applications of atomic energy, and much of American science, to the bomb, and of shackling them with hypersensitive security safeguards.

As a result, a large part of American science and technology is being transformed into a cult open only to persons willing and able to pass a political initiation test and contributing nothing to American life. Whole areas of basic science have been blacked out, as, for example, the chemistry and metallurgy of elements above lead in the table of elements. Locked laboratories, which appeared on the campus during the war, are apparently to be a permanent feature of the university landscape. "We seem to have two American physical societies," a physicist recently observed, "one whose sessions everyone goes to and where physicists pass on the qualifications of members, and one which plays the locked-lab circuit, with the FBI as membership committee."

THE division of science into two realms has had serious consequences. To begin with, nearly all the renowned company of scientists that made the atom bomb have left the AEC and the field of atomic energy. Enrico Fermi, who built the first atomic pile; J. A. Wheeler, co-author of the Bohr-Wheeler table (the first calculation of what elements might be fissionable); E. P. Wig-

LEONARD ENGEL contributes articles on science to The Nation and other magazines.

ner of Princeton; and H. A. Bethe of Cornell—to name just a few—have retired to other branches of physics. Some have quit physics altogether: J. Robert Oppenheimer, war-time director of Los Alamos, directs the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton; Leo Szilard, one of the three men who suggested the atom bomb to Roosevelt, is studying bacterial viruses; A. H. Compton is chancellor of Washington University of St. Louis; Harold Urey is analyzing fossils to determine the temperature of ancient seas. Many of these would have left the field of atomic energy in any case, for the frontiers of physical science have passed beyond nuclear fission to the mystery of cosmic rays and meson particles. Others, like Professor Wigner, would have liked to remain, intrigued with the role atomic energy can play in everyday life, but were compelled to leave by the AEC's preoccupation with the bomb and its frustrating security rules. A few serve the AEC as occasional consultants, but on the whole the commission has had to get along with the second team.

No less serious is what is happening in the classroom. Engineering schools cannot give effective training in nuclear engineering; universities cannot provide students with a real introduction to such an important area of contemporary science as radiochemistry.

The AEC's inflexible security regulations have also delayed many of its own projects and prevented the fruition of many research ideas. In fact, they nearly prevented the commission's outstanding research accomplishment, the creation of mesons in the powerful atom-smashing machines of the AEC's University of California radiation laboratory. Mesons are subatomic particles ordinarily found only in cosmic rays. Early last year surprised University of California scientists learned that their machines had been for months duplicating one of the most dramatic events in the physical world, the creation of mesons. They learned this during a visit of the Brazilian physicist C. M. G. Lattes, a leading cosmic-ray researcher, who showed his hosts a new method of developing their photographic plates. Lattes had been very nearly refused permission for the visit. His clearance took almost half a year of negotiations, which were several times on the point of breaking down.

THE question naturally arises: To what extent are these difficulties reflected in the rate of progress of the atomic-energy program? In the first place, there is no doubt that lack of first-class personnel contributed to the delay in starting the power program until last winter. Second, while the AEC has a number of impressive research accomplishments to its credit, its work on the whole has not been marked by striking originality but has been an extension of fundamental discoveries made elsewhere. Moreover, a good deal of the secret research, according to scientists familiar with it, is poorly ex-

ecuted or trivial, as is often the case when results are not held up to the inspection of other scientists.

The AEC has attempted to minimize the blighting effect of security restrictions by a number of compromise measures. It has made arrangements with the Office of Naval Research—which does not operate under the same mandatory secrecy requirements—to handle AEC basic research grants to universities. It has instituted special training programs at its main research centers and a system of fellowships for graduate students in nuclear physics and related fields. But these remedial measures have been considerably less than successful, as was shown by the collapse of the fellowship program

a few weeks ago; neither candidates nor the scientists who administered it would consent to the loyalty investigations demanded by Congress.

It is obvious that there is no easy solution for the problem of encouraging the growth of the sciences over which the bomb has cast its shadow. Their ability to move forward and to benefit man clearly demands a maximum of freedom; but non-military applications



Seligson
David E. Lilienthal

of the atom are closely intertwined with military, from which it is hardly possible to eliminate security safeguards. One thing necessary is to choose for the new AEC chairman—to replace David E. Lilienthal—a man who recognizes the importance of peaceful exploitation of the atom. Another is a reexamination of the AEC to see whether restrictions can be relaxed and whether any of its functions can be handled better by other government agencies. In particular, Congress should set up a National Science Foundation, without loyalty oath or other political strings, to take over the support of basic scientific research in the universities. This would make government-sponsored research more attractive to competent scientists.

Finally, the proposed special \$128,000,000 AEC appropriation should be allotted to the power program instead of to additional facilities for turning out bombs. Spent on bomb plants, the money will only accentuate the crippling militarization of the whole atomic undertaking. Devoted to the harnessing of atomic power, it will help turn the AEC in a direction more likely to maintain our political as well as scientific leadership.



EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

Are Britons Slacking?

WE ALL know—for the pundits of the financial pages tell us so at frequent intervals—that poor old Britain is in a sad state of economic decline. Weighed down by Socialist experiments, cribbed by controls and cabined by bureaucratic planners, it has been unable to make any real progress. On the other hand, we are informed, those countries in Western Europe which have been turning back to free enterprise—France, Belgium, Italy, even western Germany—are leaping ahead, affording proof once more that the only reliable stimulus to economic expansion is the profit motive.

It is therefore rather a shock to read in the latest *Quarterly Bulletin* of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe that the rate of industrial production declined in most European countries during the third quarter of 1949. Only in Socialist Britain was "wholly satisfactory" progress registered. In France there was a reversal of the upward trend noted earlier in the year, and in Belgium both light and heavy industry suffered a setback. Western Germany and Italy, the report adds, made little or no progress.

Although final production figures are not yet available, there is good reason to believe that Britain's "wholly satisfactory" progress continued uninterrupted up to the end of last year. Provisional estimates of the index of industrial production (1946=100), Sir Stafford Cripps told a press conference on January 9, indicated a figure of 128-129 for the first eleven months of 1949, which compares with 121 for the corresponding period in 1948. This improvement reflected increases in output of a wide range of industries. In 1948 expansion was particularly marked in metals and engineering, but last year the food, paper, clothing, furniture, and other industries were catching up.

The increase in industrial production generally was due only to a slight extent to the employment of larger numbers, for Britain has had practically full employment for the last three years, and its working population is growing very slowly. Making allowance for a small increase in the labor force during 1949, there appears to have been a rise in output per man-year of not less than 5 per cent. Nor is it only in the factories that labor productivity is advancing. Output per man-shift in the coal mines, which has been increasing slowly ever since the industry was nationalized three years ago, is now higher than before the war—"an achievement," Cripps noted, "not yet paralleled elsewhere in Europe."

It is difficult to reconcile these facts with the widespread belief that the British worker, coddled by the "welfare state," spends his time loafing and that the managers of British industries, deprived by controls and high taxation

of incentives to increase efficiency, are content to drift until the political tide turns. No doubt there are some slack managers and some idle men, but the production records which Britain has been achieving indicate hard work by a majority. Otherwise an over-all rise of productivity of 5 per cent in twelve months would be impossible. In Britain in the thirties the annual average increase in output per man-year was under 2 per cent; in this country the President's Council of Economic Advisers bases its projections of economic growth for the next five years on an estimated increase in productivity of from 2 to 2½ per cent per annum.

There are several reasons why British production and productivity are moving forward. One mentioned by Cripps on January 9 is that, compared with the period immediately after the war, there are now far fewer bottlenecks. Then the production rhythm was frequently interrupted by shortages of raw materials and other supplies. Another factor, and one which should have a cumulative effect, is the re-equipment and modernization of British factories since the war. When the peace came, Britain's industrial plant was badly run down. It had been impossible to repair much of the physical damage suffered through enemy action, and in addition there had been enforced neglect of maintenance.

From the first the Labor government's plans placed great emphasis on restoring, expanding, and modernizing the nation's capital equipment, and, in fact, it has been found possible to invest one-fifth or more of the gross national income—a far higher proportion than before the war. Part of this investment is of a social nature—houses, schools, hospitals, and so forth—but more than half is represented by new factories, machinery, power plants, and other direct aids to production. In other words, the British worker is gradually acquiring more and better tools to work with.

Some British critics of the government—the *Economist*, for instance—complain that "over-full employment" is proving a hindrance to efficiency both by reducing "labor mobility" and by removing all fear of loss of jobs. On the other hand, thanks to their new sense of security, workers are proving more amenable to the abolition of restrictive practices. In many factories cooperation between management and unions has led to changes in operating methods which have made possible important improvements in productivity. Thus steel workers have agreed to a three-shift system, so that certain kinds of plant can be operated on a continuous basis, and cotton weavers have undertaken to tend more looms. Moreover, the Labor government's good faith in the matter of full employment has helped to create a peaceful industrial climate. Relatively little time has been lost through strikes in the last four years—another reason why production has forged ahead.

Since Labor won power in 1945, production has been raised nearly 30 per cent above the pre-war level and exports about 50 per cent. Would a Tory government, relying to a greater extent on the incentives of free enterprise, improve on that record? That is the question British voters will be asking themselves in the next few weeks. If they think back to the state of economic stagnation experienced under Tory rule in the inter-war period, they should have little difficulty in finding the answer.

BOOKS and the ARTS

But we enter on burning ground as we approach the poetry of times so near to us. . . .

—MATTHEW ARNOLD

ONE of the most important by-products of the controversy following the award of the Bollingen Prize to Ezra Pound for his "Pisan Cantos" was the resurrection of an argument which threatens to involve areas of poetry and art lying far beyond the Pound case. That was the broadside delivered against the "obscurity" of much modern poetry. In winding up their editorial on the award, Messrs. Cousins and Smith of the *Saturday Review of Literature* said:

Let these artists of incomprehensibility write or paint for each other and for the few intellectuals they may gather about them. But we need not accept the judgment of those who have the power to crown these creators of chaos with awards that set them above the rest of us, who need to know the meaning of the words we are asked to study. . . . We have been fooled and derided long enough.—SRL, June 11, 1949.

Such statements, and the attitude behind them, have a deceptively democratic tone. The purpose of poetry, runs the argument of the anti-obscurantist, is communication. The failure to communicate is a failure in art. A poem or a picture which is incoherent is always worthless, and usually offensive. The anti-obscurantist will admit that there is a scale of taste and understanding, and that not every painting in the museum need communicate with every child or Sunday visitor who goes to see it. But among the accusers are critics and professors of literature who are obviously well qualified to judge poetry. Even the avant-garde admirers of avant-garde poetry treat it as an object of annotation rather than appreciation. Under these conditions it becomes clear that modern "obscure" poetry is a kind of private lingo, like the jargon used by Villon and his fellow-thieves. Now, poetry has a social role to fulfil. It must not depend on coteries or on private symbolisms, but should serve to

Essays and Asides

THE NECESSITY OF OBSCURITY

BY JACOB KORG

give people in general access to important insights and experiences of life. In fact, the usual numerical standards of political democracy are not wholly inapplicable; contact with broad publics is wholesome for poetry. For these reasons, says the anti-obscurantist, let the long-hairs read their Pounds and Eliots and Dylan Thomases, and I shall turn, together with the general community of mankind, to Frost and Housman and other poets who write English as I know it or can know it.

The hostility of this argument is one of the results of the success of the twentieth-century esoteric masterpieces "Ulysses," "The Waste Land," Pound's "Cantos," and "Finnegans Wake." These were produced in the tradition of the Bohemian experimentalism of the earlier part of the century, which operated under the battle cry, "*Epater les bourgeois!*" Their obscurity seems a deliberate affront to the general public, who may be counted on to react much as have the editor and publisher of the *Saturday Review*.

A favorite method of the Dadaists in their attempt to destroy conventional artistic standards was to make use of the intolerance they encountered. At one of their art shows deliberately organized to outrage people, for example, the public was provided with axes with which they could attack the exhibits they found offensive. In awarding their prize to Pound, the Bollingen committee, it appears, have handed the public an ax.

THE FALLACIOUSNESS of the view which insists that a poem must have a clear meaning if it is to be considered a poem at all can best be exposed by returning to some facts about the relationship between a poem's meaning and the poem itself which are by no means new but which seem to be in danger

of being forgotten in some quarters. A poem's meaning, while it may exist apart from the poem itself—in a paraphrase or another

poem, for example—depends, for its communication, on the language which the poet uses. In fact, the meter, imagery, and vocabulary often carry the burden of its effect, and we consider that poetry most beautiful in which the "content"—the sentiments or ideas expressed—is closely echoed by the "form"—the phonic qualities, imagery, and other instruments which the poet has at his command. The best poetry is that in which the form and content seem locked together in an indissoluble union, so that the poem itself far surpasses, in its communicative power, any straightforward paraphrase of its message. We are accustomed to seeing the essence of a poet's feelings in his technique. The free, variable, blank-verse line, the prodigal imagery, and the Protean vocabulary of Shakespeare contrast meaningfully with the strict Alexandrine, bare grandeur, and rigidly disciplined word-choice of Racine. Poetic technique adapts itself to the constantly changing task of expression laid upon it.

Unless a poet's message is the exact copy of some forerunner's, we should expect some individualization of technique, not necessarily in anything so radical as metrical form, though this, of course, has happened, but in the very sensitive elements of imagery, vocabulary, syntax, and sound. It is those things, essentially, which give the experience of a poem. Familiar thoughts expressed in familiar imagery, often deliberately intended to recall standard anthology pieces, are the safe stock in trade of popular poets. Ordinary poetry is content to play upon the reader's sense of recognition, and to provide enjoyment through that. But recognition only warms, it does not fire; and the great poets are those who address themselves to the difficult task of writing a new poem every time they write rather

than another version of some old one.

This notion is so far from being novel that the head-notes of school anthologies, those reliable recorders of received opinions, assume every notable poet to be an innovator. Those who did not "invent" at least "perfected" or "reformed." The feeling is reflected that a poem's value depends upon its character, its fidelity to its own nature, its integrity and distinctness as a separate object in our experience. Every good poem involves this paradox: working with language, the most conventional of artifacts, it must nevertheless be inventive enough in this medium to achieve a thing outside convention and beyond our former experience. It must awaken in the reader some latent awareness accessible to everyone but never touched on before.

If, then, these qualities in a poem depend upon departure from established practice, it follows that the work will be, to some degree, strange to the tastes and opinions which it meets. It will be called unconventional and, of course, obscure. It will always meet the opposition of an established mode. And the greater its deviation from established practices, the more incoherent will it seem to tastes attuned to those practices.

Every episode in the history of the development of the arts attests this fact. Instances of the opposition which writers, composers, and artists encountered, whether their work involved notable innovations or not, will occur to everyone. Those who created entirely new fields, who found an art of brick and left one of marble, met with the most violent condemnation. The Fauves were called that name in anger before they took it to themselves. For a hundred years everyone thought of Blake as a rather interesting madman. At the first performance of Beethoven's First Symphony the critics grumbled about the kettledrums; at the second performance the work was described as pretentious and confused. The critic Jeffrey, quoting a passage of Wordsworth's "Excursion," remarked: "... if our readers can form the slightest guess at its meaning, we must give them credit for a sagacity to which we have no pretension." His fellow-reviewer, Croker, reported that he had read one of the four books of Keats's "Endymion,"

could discover no meaning in it, and gave it up. ("Endymion," or a part of it, is often read by college students today.) The weight of the critical bludgeon lies in that word "meaning." It suggests that the practiced chemist has analyzed the new concoction with skill and detachment, and it has faded away into vapor.

Remarks which Sydney Olivier made about sixty years ago in speaking of John Stuart Mill and his effect on the thought of his time apply to poets as well. Said Olivier:

The greater a man is, the less likely is his own age thoroughly to comprehend him, and we constantly find that opinions which, thanks to our later birth, we of lesser minds have been able to arrive at, starting on a higher level, seem to have been the inmost beliefs of the thinker himself, tho' held most unimportant, erratic, or insane, by his contemporaries. . . . New ideas require new language, and it is seldom that the mass of a man's contemporaries will take the trouble to ascertain what his new idea means. *Omne ignotum*, in philosophy or social science, is held by the multitude for nonsense.

It is almost inevitable, then, that a work which contains some profound revision of the standards upon which its art has been based will meet with some such charge as that brought against Pound and modern poetry in general. Only after a certain period of underground existence can it emerge gradually from hiding, perhaps to become a classic. There are many possible explanations for this lag in recognition. It always seems perilous to call a poet great if he is still alive. The first qualification for immortality, after all, is death.

One of the fears that keep us from giving contemporary poetry its due is the fear of being gulled, of displaying ourselves publicly in an embarrassing position. But reading is a private act, and discussion and criticism, if carried on honestly and with freedom from pomposity, have nothing to fear from merely being wrong. The demands of public reputation can be fatal if they are obeyed at the expense of private integrity. The price of a momentary intellectual security for our age is too high if it condemns the poet or artist with a new point of view to play the part of Cassandra and waste his precious gift on deaf minds.

To Moscow—and Back

THE GOD THAT FAILED. A Confession by Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Richard Wright, André Gide, Louis Fischer, and Stephen Spender. Edited by Richard Crossman. Harper and Brothers. \$3.50.

THIS symposium of confessions of ex-Communists and ex-fellow-travelers, recording their enchantment and disenchantment with communism, can be defined, without stretching a point, as a work of art. It has the artistic merits of a good mosaic in which the separate parts are obvious but do not destroy the consistency of the pattern. But more than that it has the artistic virtue of illustrating a universal spiritual tragedy in Western history by means of the highly particular autobiographical notes of six sensitive men of letters. Of the six, one is Italian, one English, one French, one German-Hungarian, and two are American, one white and one Negro. Their experiences varied. They had this in common: they were drawn to communism by "their abhorrence of injustice in capitalist society, and they were finally repelled by the greater injustices of the Communist tyranny."

The moving power of their several chronicles derives not merely from the unity of the theme embodied in significant variations but also from the reader's sense that they are recording a tragedy in which all of us have been involved. That tragedy is that the moral protest against the injustices of our civilization should have been organized in a movement which replaced the whips of injustice with the scorpions of tyranny. Most of the six confess to having entertained the error of assuming that a historical force which challenges an unjust system thereby proves its own justice. Some required only a short time and some took longer to reconcile themselves to one of the most tragic aspects of human history—namely, the possibility that an evil may be supplanted by a more grievous one.

The chronicle of their several pilgrimages toward the Communist Utopia contains, as the editor, Richard Crossman, suggests, the single theme of a passion for justice, inspired by more or less unconventional Christian convictions, which Silone movingly relates to

the Franciscan tradition of his native Abruzzi. Only two experienced the injustices of our world in their personal fate—the two proletarians, Silone and Wright. Silone tells a tragic tale of feudal injustice in his native village, which opened his eyes much as Marx's eyes were opened by the severity which was the lot of peasants who picked up fallen wood in the forest preserves of Westphalia. Richard Wright saw the Communist movement as a bond of universal fellowship in which a Negro American might find meaning. The common faith which drew all of them is nicely expressed by Gide:

My conversion is like a faith. My whole being is bent toward a single goal, all my thoughts, even involuntary, lead me back to it. In the deplorable state of distress of the modern world the plan of the Soviet Union seems to point to this. . . . If my life were necessary to assure the success of the Soviet Union I would gladly give it immediately.

This strong "will to believe" in an earthly paradise, which frequently persists for months and years after evidence accumulates that the paradise is a hell of tyranny and chicane, is also a universal characteristic of the confessions. Wright and Spender are most quickly disillusioned. In three cases experiences in Spain, and the conviction that Russia was on the right side in that struggle, postponed the final dénouement.

How did the disillusionment take place? Whether, as in the case of Silone, Communist tyranny was experienced in direct contact with the highest Russian oligarchs, or, as in the case of Wright, the arbitrariness and inhumanity of authoritarianism became known through contact with the petty Communist bosses of Chicago, the experiences and reactions are similar. Koestler and Gide are both outraged by the extravagant privileges enjoyed by intellectuals in Russia so long as they wear the yoke of tyranny meekly. Gide is primarily concerned with the corruption of culture and art under a dictatorship. Fischer began to doubt as he observed the various purges. He throttled his doubts until the Nazi-Soviet pact finally destroyed the structure of his faith.

Koestler is most revealing and most amusing in recording the elaborate system of self-deception by which an es-

entially honest man tries to preserve both his loyalty and his self-respect amid the wild confusion of changes in the party line. Wright adds a nice bit of wry humor to this analysis by reporting an incident in which a lunatic, escaped from an insane asylum, could threaten the standing of a loyal member of the John Reed Club because the club was under the erroneous impression that the lunatic was armed with party authority. "What struck me most about Russian Communists, even in such exceptional personalities as Lenin and Trotsky," reports Silone, "was their utter incapacity to be fair in discussing opinions which conflicted with their own." Most of the confessions reveal not only the inhumanity which is derived from uncontrolled and uncriticized power but the cruelty which is the fruit of a fanatic and absolute creed.

It was the need not for freedom as such but for the preservation of the dignity of man which finally convinced these men that their god had failed. For

Koestler this sense of an outraged human dignity in the Soviet system came as a kind of religious illumination in a Spanish prison. He learned "that man is a reality and that mankind is an abstraction, that men cannot be treated as operations of political arithmetic, . . . that ethics is not a function of social utility and charity not a petty-bourgeois prejudice but the gravitational force which keeps civilization in its orbit." "There is no freedom in a dictatorship," declares Fischer, "because there are no inalienable rights. The dictator has so much power and the individual so little that the dictator can take away any right which he gives." Spender finds the dignity and value of the individual destroyed by faith in the inexorable forces of history, by a determinism which leaves no scope for individual conscience. "In one's absorption with an ideal," writes Fischer, "it is possible to imagine that one generation may be sacrificed for its descendants. But sacrificing people may become a

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habit into the third and fourth generation."

The editor having been discerning, only essentially healthy ex-Communists are included in this group of penitents. Those who have been maimed, who have turned to reaction or to another form of totalitarianism or have become cynical are rightly not heard from. The six remain devoted to the cause of social justice, but they have found that freedom is a more important component of justice than they had realized in their pilgrimage to Moscow.

I find only one lack in this moving series of confessions. None of the authors speculate very profoundly on the reasons which persuade modern men to seek a Utopia or why their dreams turn into nightmares. If a political scheme of redemption endows the oligarchs of its system of power with the halo of absolute sanctity, they exercise their power more vexatiously than the traditional lords of history, who were unable to claim so much sanctity. Was not the pilgrimage of the several authors of the symposium to the Utopia of Moscow a symptom of the false yearning in our whole culture for absolute goals in history, whereas we must be content with fragmentary and tentative achievements of the good in all our historical striving? Does not the charity that Koestler calls the "gravitational force which keeps history in its orbit" derive from a humility that recognizes the incomplete and fragmentary character of every scheme of justice, so that the highest form of perfection in history is incompatible with any claim that we have the final form of perfection in our keeping?

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Melville—a Fresh Reading

HERMAN MELVILLE: A CRITICAL STUDY. By Richard Chase. The Macmillan Company. \$4.50.

MR. CHASE'S "Melville" is written with a desperate sense of social and cultural urgency. It is a gospel of salvation by literature, and, moreover, a highly doctrinaire one. As a critic Mr. Chase is largely concerned with shaping Melville to a preconceived pattern of what he considers to be psychically beneficial for us in our present crisis of spirit. To the unregenerate

reader at least, the relevance of this scheme to what Melville actually wrote seems at times far-fetched indeed. It leads Mr. Chase to expurgate—for the supposed good of our souls—much that is imaginatively effective in Melville, while minor aspects of his work are given an emphasis out of all proportion to their real value.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chase goes about his missionary task with remarkable resourcefulness, and in some respects his method yields points of genuine critical interest. His book traces in its ramifications through Melville's writings what was certainly one of their central themes—the search of the son for the father, the quest of outcast Ishmael for his birthright. His reading of Melville in this light deepens measurably our sense of the psychic tensions and stresses from which Melville's work sprang. It likewise gives an impressively coherent import to the complex of symbols through which this inner drama projected itself as literature. It is here perhaps that Mr. Chase is at his best—in what he makes, for instance, of Melville's space images or in his textual explications of such passages as that on the Nantucketers in "Moby Dick." In this connection he also develops interestingly Constance Rourke's hints on Melville's use of American folklore.

"Moby Dick" is of course central to Mr. Chase's canon. The later works, to which he devotes two-thirds of his book, inspire him to some of his most elaborate feats of critical bravura, as well as some of his most questionable ones. With remarkable ingenuity he conjures up from their imperfections of form and ambiguities of meaning a figure of the most approved contemporary chic: the quasi-Joycean experimenter of "Pierre," the neo-liberal satirist of "The Confidence Man," the intellectual in the wasteland of "Clarel." But as one would expect, it is his chapter on "Moby Dick" that is most highly charged with his sense of Melville's latter-day significance. Captain Ahab's tragedy he interprets as "the self-defeat of leadership"—a nemesis of American creativity in untranscended conflict with the conditions of its fulfilment. Ahab is the "false Prometheus" in the catalogue of mythic archetypes he works out from the ensemble of Melville's characters—the Prometheus who fails to

become Oedipus, or in other words the grand example of arrested development in the American psyche. To Ahab Mr. Chase counterposes the briefly glimpsed figure of Bulkington, who, with Jack Chase in "White-Jacket," is the symbol of full "Promethean-Oedipean" maturity, what Ishmael, who is also Young America, "may become if he does not become Ahab," or, conversely, a victim of infantile regression like Billy Budd. Thus "Moby Dick" is conned as an oracle of American destiny at its crisis of leadership, and Melville's search for the father, with its possibilities of fulfilment or frustration, becomes the key to the American future.

In the aftermath of the First World War D. H. Lawrence made the discovery of "Moby Dick" as a parable of the American psyche—a momentous "shock of recognition." After another world war, when the shadow of America looms more portentously than ever, Mr. Chase reinterprets the symbols. One can say of his book that for all its over-elaborate apparatus and its weird distortions of emphasis it communicates to some degree the excitement, legitimate or illegitimate, of Lawrence's pioneering act of intuition.

HOWARD DOUGHTY, JR.

First Novel

THE SHELTERING SKY. By Paul Bowles. New Directions. \$2.75.

PAUL BOWLES, an American composer and music critic who at the age of thirty-eight has taken to writing fiction, seems to have the same sort of passion for the blinding heat and the endless sand of the Sahara Desert that Conrad had for the sea. He is now living in Tangiers, and from this strange city, which in the past has attracted Wilde, Gide, and others, he sends us a striking first novel in which the desert is more than a setting for a story of frustration and collapse; it is a protagonist, more memorable than any of Bowles's unhappy people who venture into it.

Port and Kit Moresby, two New Yorkers, have come to North Africa to solve their marital problems. Rich and neurotic, like Hemingway or Fitzgerald creatures, they wander aimlessly in the hope that somehow they can get back to sleeping in the same bedroom again.

But they never do. Instead, Kit has an affair with Tunner, a lightweight friend whom they have brought with them, while Port consorts briefly with an Arab girl and later succumbs to an attack of typhoid.

When he dies, Kit, slowly losing her grip on reality, engages in a fantastic Arabian Nights episode in the seraglio of a rich trader, after which she becomes completely unhinged and disappears for good.

"The Sheltering Sky" is not entirely successful in its aim, which I take to be an anatomy of mid-century desolation. Its characters are an unsympathetic lot, not, like Lady Ashley and Jake Barnes in "The Sun Also Rises," representative of a class of people. Their adventures are fascinating because Bowles's narrative gifts are considerable, but they lack any striking significance.

Furthermore, Bowles, who has translated some of Sartre's plays, has unnecessarily saturated his writing in an existentialist gloom that seems imposed from without instead of risen from within the story. The Moresbys are so

deadly serious about themselves, so utterly without a sense of humor, that they seem practically dead. They are believable, but one wishes one had known them somewhat earlier in their marriage.

What will draw attention to this novel is the economy and sharpness of the writing. The destructive forces of two decadent cultures are subtly exposed by contrasting the Moresbys' hopeless self-pity and the wasteland's relentless ferocity. The Moresbys are in Africa instead of on analysts' couches in New York because Port has a compulsion to travel, not as a tourist who "generally comes back home at the end of a few weeks or months [but as a] traveler, belonging no more to one place than to the next." Travel is not therapeutic, though. In their joyless days they move from one sordid village to the next, knowing only that they would rather be in Africa than in America. Bowles has a wonderful way of making you feel *there*. Even the last fifty pages of unbelievable eroticism compel you, as a well-told fairy tale does, to accept Kit's sudden nymphomania as true.

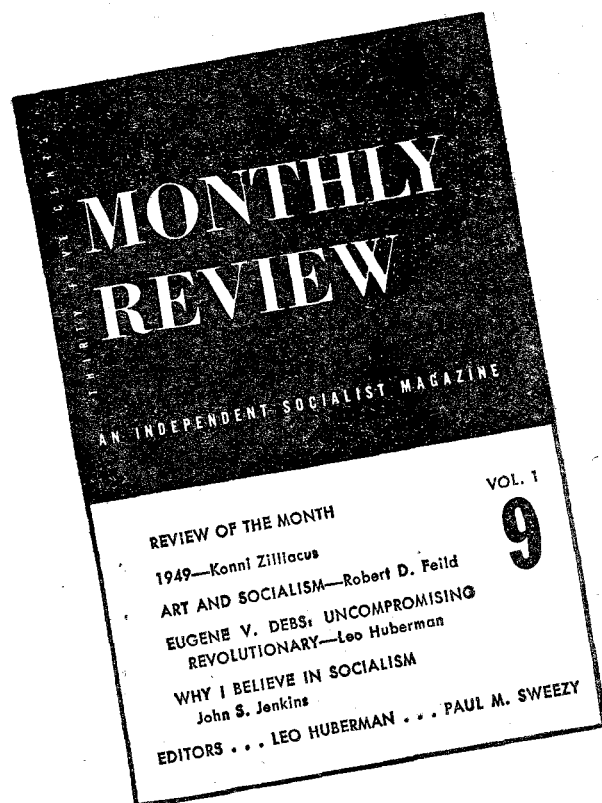
The story, paced as if it were a thriller, bogs down only when murky symbolism is introduced at crucial moments. If Bowles can learn to create people of more substance than the Moresbys, he will become an outstanding novelist. He is already an outstanding writer.

ROBERT MINTON

David Lilienthal

THIS I DO BELIEVE. By David E. Lilienthal. Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

SOME years ago I spent a day with David Lilienthal in a construction town on the banks of the Little Tennessee. In the afternoon we went over the big Fontana Dam with the engineers, looking at the turbines, filling our heads and our notebooks with statistics. In the evening David Lilienthal talked about democracy. He spoke about the people of the valley—the farmers, the business men, the people who built the dam, all the people for whom the TVA had meant a larger way of life and a new idea of citizenship. David Lilienthal was more impressed with



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people than with power. Perhaps that is one reason why he quit his job as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission: eventually atomic energy may supplant electricity as a servant of mankind, but at the moment it means bombs, and the bomb business is not Lilienthal's *métier*.

I shall be surprised if Lilienthal's resignation means his withdrawal from public life. For a good many years now he has been "working at democracy where the going has been and still is tough." Like a good many other men of ability in American public life, he has had his fair share of the McKellars and Hickenloopers, the witch-hunters, the troglodytes, and the honest critics. He probably wants a rest from it all. But fortunately for this country he has a restless faith in democracy that will keep him available for some other big job in the public interest. That, at least, is the conclusion one must draw from his most recent book.

Lilienthal is not happy about America's political health. But unlike so many liberal critics, he has an almost brash, Whitmanesque faith in America's future. He admits the menace of communism—of Soviet foreign policy and of the corroding acid of Communist Party activity. But he sees little point in attempting to build against this menace a Maginot defense. A healthy democracy is the only effective answer to an aggressive communism. He says: "The danger is that in the strain of the contest with Communist ideas and defensive efforts to prevent its growth we shall abandon the very attributes of democracy that give us strength at home and moral leadership abroad. . . . A democracy can best defend itself by living its faith, by remaining a democracy."

He believes that there is a basic faith

behind American democracy—belief in the human spirit, belief in reason and the inquiring mind, belief in the moral law and the supremacy of God. But in an age of rock-ribbed ideologies this faith is exasperatingly pragmatic. "We do not start with all the economic and political answers. We make up the answers as we go along." America, pledged to free enterprise, operates the two biggest public-power developments in the world. Suspicious of government intervention, it justifies great social-service schemes if they enlarge the freedom and security of the individual.

It may be that this very democratic pragmatism leaves America open to the dangers that Lilienthal lists. In an age of fear we are quick to seek refuge in authority or give the military too prominent a place in national affairs. The complexities of a modern industrial system suggest an answer in big, centralized government. The free and easy zeal of Congress leads to meddling in affairs that properly are the responsibility of the executive branch or a public corporation. The uninhibited climate of free research enables the scientist to develop the techniques, the gadgets, the healing drugs that make life richer and more secure. But the free scientist also develops atomic and bacteriological weapons before our society has acquired the moral or political stamina to impose its controls.

The answers to such problems, says Lilienthal, are to be found in more and better democracy. Running America is the people's business. It takes the best brains. It requires the men and women with the highest moral integrity. It is no job for the hacks or time-server that occupy many of the key posts in American political and administrative life. "It seems to me," says Lilienthal, "that a moral obligation to engage in

public service during a part of every qualified man's best years has become, for the generation that lies ahead, an actual necessity."

David Lilienthal is sanguine about American democracy, and he is one man who has the right to an opinion. He has seen it at its best and its worst; he has seen it working wonders and he has seen it frustrated by stupid and selfish men. For him the balance comes out on the right side. He says: "No great national spirit can be built up by wearing a hair shirt and sitting in the ashes of our shortcomings. . . . We have great visions today. We are going to have more of them." J. KING GORDON

The Literature of Latin America

NEW WORLD LITERATURE. Arturo Torres-Rioseco. University of California Press. \$3.75.

RECENTLY a lady of wide European culture asked me to read aloud to her, in Spanish, certain Latin American poems which she had come to admire in English translation. They were the poems of Jorge Carrera Andrade, and it was Muna Lee's appealing translation which introduced them to her.

The incident stands as a symbol of the degree of interest to which Latin American poetry has attained in this country. Over the last twenty years it has made its way slowly, if not very surely, to the point where an educated American is interested enough to read it in translation. The next step will be to learn the language as he or she might in earlier years have learned French or German for a similar purpose. Perhaps in the next decade this second change will come.

Meanwhile books like this one of Torres-Rioseco should help. Mr. Rioseco is a Chilean by birth and at present a lecturer in American universities. His book on South American literature, as one might expect, is devoted more to Spanish than to Brazilian writing, but he does make interested gestures toward the latter. His book is more than the usual professorial dissertation. He gives less space to the old and more to the new than is customary, and he writes with force and pungency.

He analyzes the various influences—Spanish, French, and English—that have

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played upon the formation of Latin American literature and reexamines certain famous figures. His comment on the importance of French influence will surprise Americans who take it for granted that because the South Americans speak Spanish they get their canons of literary taste from Spain. Speaking of the early twentieth century he says, "One had to write elegantly with French exquisiteness . . . insolently we declared that the Spaniards lacked style, that they did not know how to write, that they were prosaic." This was the frame of mind that prepared them for their great modernistic writers.

To the author his own most interesting chapters are those on French culture and on Ruben Dario, whose work he attempts to revalue. To an American, remembering the long period of southern indignation against the Colossus of the North, his chapter on Jose Enrique Rodo is even more interesting. He praises Rodo's fine prose, which he says "bears a certain resemblance to the poetry of Emerson in that the main idea moves in ascending circles . . . the idea begins to whirl spirally and with the very intensity of the accelerated movement keeps rising like a perforated metal plate spinning about a rod until it is thrown off to lofty zones of harmony and violent energy." But he claims that the South American, for all his hostility toward the United States, knew nothing about the North American culture he affected to despise. His judgment of the United States was European, and he did not realize the truth which has been brought out by more recent Latin Americans—that there is a basic link between the two continents in spite of great superficial differences. Men like Torres realize, as Rodo did not, that much of the progress of the United States is enormously attractive to South America and "perfectly adaptable to a Hispanic-American cultural progress without any danger ensuing of the submergence of their racial idiosyncrasy."

Mr. Torres-Rioseco pays his respects to the poetry of social protest which has played so large a part in Latin American writing since 1930. The academic value of his book is obvious; in addition it has a fresh and provocative quality which should commend it to the non-academic reader.

MILDRED ADAMS

Verse Chronicle

GOOD tidings, to begin with. "The Wandering Scholars," by Helen Waddell, is now available in an American edition (Holt, \$5). This is a delightful book, combining industrious and devoted scholarship, enthusiasm and charm, beautiful prose, and a happy faculty of the recreative, in more senses than one, imagination. "The scholar's lyric of the twelfth century seems as new a miracle as the first crocus; but its earth is the leafdrift of centuries of forgotten scholarship." So Miss Waddell goes back, with delicate and loving uncovering, as far as Ausonius, and on to songs in Middle German and Provençal.

Well, all that was in the morning of our world, of whose dusk one can read in "The Canticle of the Rose," by Edith Sitwell (Vanguard, \$3.75). No little of this material appeared not long since in the collection called "The Song of the Cold"; to his remarks on that occasion your verse chronicler has little to add, still persisting in his preference for the Sitwell rococo to the Sitwell apocalyptic. To the present collection the author has written a long introduction, interesting, technically, in its detailed analysis of sound effects, how begot, how nourished. Interesting, technically, though Dame Edith seems a little too impressed with the uniqueness of her discoveries; Housman, it might be remarked, also knew a good deal about such matters. And irritating, sociably, for she discourses in a very haughty manner indeed, and no more endearingly when she lapses plaintive.

The principles of the literary school called Apocalypse are stated firmly, clearly, and a little aggressively, by the Reverend Mr. E. F. F. Hill, in "A New Romantic Anthology," edited by Stefan Schimanski and Henry Treece (New Directions, \$2.50), printed in London by the Grey Walls Press. Apocalypse, I take it, is in favor of God and love on earth; I wish the apocalyptics could manage to sound sort of less cross and furious about it. This anthology contains general essays on romanticism, particular essays on romanticism in modern poetry, the cinema, and the novel; still more particular essays on romanticism in contemporary poetry, English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh; and

a section on romanticism in the short story, with three examples. The term romanticism, undefined or defined variously, seems to be synonymous with everything from Gothic to vulgar; at least the general editors do some pretty nasty name-calling in their remarks about the classic, which they are against. Herbert Read, who follows them, is more polite, thoughtful, and painstaking, and also a little stiff. I like Francis Scarfe's remark that "sensitiveness to language avails little unless there is sensitiveness to experience, and experi-

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ence itself is of no worth to a poet unless it is to some degree organized and integrated." Of the poems in the various sections Padraic Fallon's version of Raftery's Dispute with the Whiskey is a grand exciting blaze of mockery, and Douglas Young's poem in Scots, Ice-Flumes Owregie Their Lades, a masterful tour de force; the sections of verse are interesting, too, in the national differences they reveal, not so much in subject and epithet as in the varieties of cadence, the different kind of lilt and run, going through the rhythm of the lines. Grudgingly, I give the Irish best and the Welsh second; to make up for which candor against my heritage, I should like to quote extensively from Glyn Jones, who writes the preface to the section on Cymri:

The modern poet is always an amateur. If he is lucky he is a *rentier*. If he is unlucky he is a school teacher. [Come, come, Mr. Jones.] Instead of taking his poetry for granted as an essential commodity which society will keep him alive to produce, he feels himself too often, *qua* poet, an outcast and even a rebel. He adopts as the badge of this outlawry strange clothes, strange opinions, and strange behavior. He will even make a virtue of necessity and *accentuate* the differences between himself and the other craftsmen and workers who continue to make a living by their skill. . . . If he is offered a paid job to produce poetry, say a Poet Laureateship, he will stipulate

that he will accept it only on condition that he does not have to produce any poetry. . . . Since no individual, or movement, or institution will pay him for odes and laudations, he is driven back upon expressing his own emotions and praising, or at least writing about, himself. Since no body of technique has been officially handed down to him, he will invent his own technique. Since no one will read his poems he will write poems which nobody *can* read. Since he does not need to write occasional poetry, and since there is no time limit set by which he has to produce his work, he will wait upon inspiration. And so on. Such is the modern poet, an amateur, a "seer," a waiter upon the divine afflatus, an agonized producer of unwanted commodities.

New Directions has also published "The Lion and the Lady," and other poems, by Emma Swan (\$2). Dear, dear; here it comes again! A publisher who will risk his money bringing out books of verse by new poets, and make a fine-looking book, and yet the content disappointing. Miss Swan's verse seems to me to be dry to the point of desiccation.

The indefatigable Muriel Rukeyser has appeared lately with *two* volumes—an "Orpheus" (Centaur Press, \$2), and "Elegies" (New Directions, \$5). Of the comparisons which Miss Rukeyser invites with these titles, the less said the better. *Schloss Duino, soll leben!* ROLFE HUMPHRIES

Drama

MARGARET
MARSHALL

IN "THE COCKTAIL PARTY" (Henry Miller's Theater) T. S. Eliot has brought off a triple play—a drama in verse, a sophisticated comedy with a happy ending, and a serious statement on the human condition—which so abounds in complicated pleasures for the ear and for the mind that one's reservations edge in only after the sound and sight of it have faded away. It is, in other words, good theater, not to be missed. If it is also, strictly speaking, minor Eliot, it is nevertheless of a quality sufficiently uncommon on the Broadway stages to make it stand out; aside from this, it is fascinating simply as the most recent and not the least intriguing of Eliot's experiments, and its defects are almost as interesting as its virtues.

I would not hazard any firm judgment on the play as verse after one hearing, though I have confidence in my impression that it seldom rises to poetry. It does fulfil the function Eliot claims for it—it provides a context, an underplay of rhythm and tone, that allows for formulations and flights which would jut awkwardly from a base of prose.

"The Cocktail Party" scores its greatest success as sophisticated comedy—for the reason that it draws on the boldness, wit, and elegance that provided the furnishings of "Prufrock" and "The Wasteland." The situation is the eternal triangle, with sub-triangles. Lavinia Chamberlayne, who is incapable of inspiring love, has just left her husband Edward, who is incapable of loving but has been making love to Celia Coplestone—who is devoted to Edward or thinks she is. Lavinia meanwhile has been playing at love with young Peter Quilpe, who is in love with Celia. As the play opens, all but Lavinia are at the cocktail party she has arranged and then walked out on. Also present are two amusingly tiresome people, seemingly uninvolved but obviously interested, and an unidentified guest to whom Edward, when he has got the others out of the house, confides his troubles.

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The Stranger proves to be Sir Henry Harcourt-Riley of Harley Street—an analyst, presumably, but better described as a physician of the soul (at whose activities most working analysts would look askance). He takes in hand the three principals, Edward, Lavinia, and Celia—the two tiresome guests turn out to be his assistants—forces them to face their real selves and to make decisions about their lives, each according to his drives and his deserts.

Edward and Lavinia choose to make the best of their marriage—and they get a bill. Celia, it develops, is really a saint—and there is no charge. She joins a nursing order and goes to a particularly benighted colony where she finds the martyrdom she seeks. In the last act another cocktail party is in progress in the Chamberlaynes' drawing room. This time Lavinia is present. So are all the original guests—except Celia. We learn that Edward and Lavinia have found a kind of happiness in working out a *modus vivendi*; and Celia's death, since that was what she wanted, is presented, with Sir Henry elucidating, as part of the happy ending.

In the play as drawing-room comedy Celia is merely one of three troubled souls, and on this superficial level the delineation of her character and her fate is convincing enough (though, as a friend pointed out, the report of a death which is symbol as well as fact would be much more effective if it were not immediately preceded by another report, extremely witty and realistic and therefore distracting, of the state of public affairs in the colony in question, which is delivered by Sir Henry's assistant, who has just been there). The character and role of Sir Henry are likewise, in the context of comedy, acceptable.

In the play as serious statement, however, Celia and Sir Henry have, of course, far more significant roles, the one as heroine, the other as the "guardian" of human souls and like mysteries. And on this level the conception, as well as the characterization, of Celia is far too neat and arbitrary; Sir Henry emerges, to quote an English reviewer's comment, as a superior Buchmanite; and the serious statement sounds more like a prose pronouncement formu-

lated in the stale shallows of a church close than a poetic revelation rising from the depths of genuine religious feeling. Or of ordinary human feeling. Emotionally "The Cocktail Party" is thin and rather cold.

Incidentally, the part of Celia in the performance I saw was played by an understudy. I thought she played it well—the acting, on the whole, is excellent—but it is just possible that Irene Worth makes Celia more convincing. I shall report on this particular point after another view—and perhaps note some of the second thoughts the play and its performance give rise to.

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and Juliet"—exhibited familiar gifts, flaws, and mannerisms. One of the mannerisms which are disturbing to the eye and sometimes have results that are disturbing to the ear is the sharp anticipatory upbeat; another is the uninhibited body movements with which, in the excitement of the occasion, Bernstein conveys not only his wishes to the orchestra but his emotions to everyone present. The gifts produced a magnificent performance of Hindemith's piece; the flaws showed themselves in the performances of the other works. The Bach concerto, with Bernstein conducting from the piano, was played simply and smoothly, until he began to play alone in the long cadenza of the first movement—and to play Bach with affettuoso nuances suited for Schumann. There was some fussing with phrasing and tempo in the *Romeo Alone* excerpt; even more questionable was the muting of one of the four horns in the horn episode of the *Queen Mab* scherzo; but quite shocking was what was done in the *Love Scene*. One of the most extraordinary things about this heart-piercingly expressive and lovely piece is its reticence—the reticence, for example, of the mournful statement of cellos and horn after the preliminary murmurings of strings and woodwinds: Berlioz's directions are *un pochettino animato* and *p* with a crescendo to *poco sf*; but Bernstein slowed down for an expansively impassioned *f* with a crescendo to a big climax; and there were other passages of the same kind in which he did the same thing. But the brilliant *Festivities at the House of Capulet*, the *Queen Mab*, and the wonderful *Romeo in the Vault of the Capulets*, which Bernstein commendably added to the more frequently heard excerpts—of these he conducted superb performances.

Concerning Guido Cantelli, on the other hand, who again conducted the N. B. C. Symphony in four broadcasts—mostly of Haydn's Symphony No. 94, Mozart's K. 201, Beethoven's Seventh, Tchaikovsky's Fourth, Stravinsky's "Song of the Nightingale," and Hindemith's "Mathis der Maler"—the one flaw to report was a tempo for the minuet movement of Haydn's symphony as impossibly fast (for the flow, the articulation, the sense of the music) as Toscanini's several years ago. But no

other flaws, and no mannerisms—only powers, methods, taste, control, and results again of the same kind as Toscanini's. That is, a precisely, clearly delineative and completely functional beat, with which were produced performances that shaped the works strictly on the lines laid out by the composers' directions about tempo and dynamics, and that did this with clarity of texture and outline, continuity of impetus, organic coherence, precision and brilliance of execution and sonority. It was an experience to hear for the first time a performance of Tchaikovsky's Fourth like Toscanini's of the "Pathétique"—a simple realization of Tchaikovsky's score, far more effective than the distorting intensification of all the other performances I had heard.

As for Toscanini's own powers, they have revealed themselves amazingly undiminished in performances—of Beethoven's Second and "Eroica" Symphonies, Haydn's No. 98, Debussy's "La Mer," the excerpts from Berlioz's "Romeo," Tchaikovsky's "Manfred," and excerpts from Wagner's "Götterdämmerung" and "Parsifal"—that have been "as fresh and glistening as creation itself."

Nobody should miss seeing Uday Shankar, of whom one can still say what Edwin Denby said in 1937—that "his exact control every gradation of dancing—fluidity or accent, lyricism or characterization, space movement or stationary gesture, virtuoso precision or vigorous generality—is marvelous." This although some of the new numbers are folksy and cute, and a drum dance by Mahabir is something that could have been taken from a Coney Island side-show. As for the music, I am still the outsider looking in, and uninvolved except by one religious song on the first program.

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